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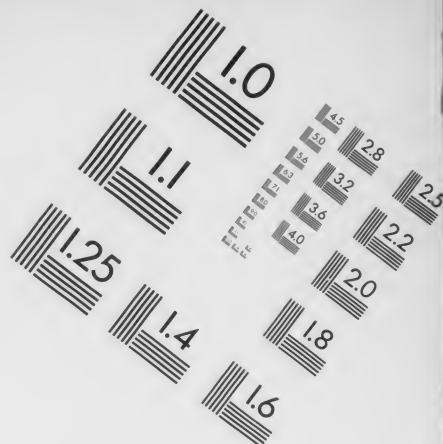
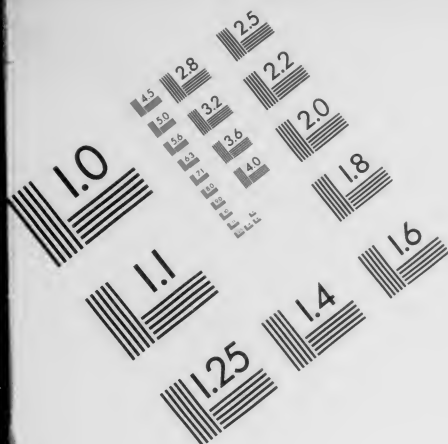
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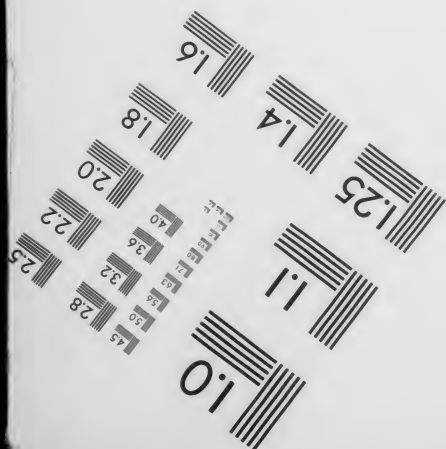
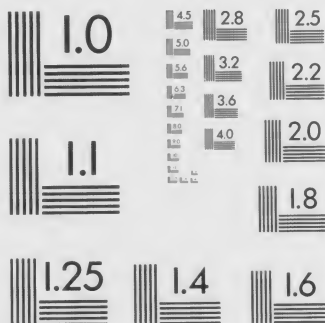
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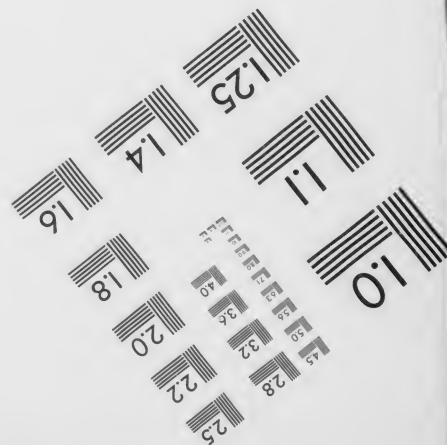
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ENGLAND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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ENGLAND  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

A STUDY OF THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF  
BRITISH POWER WITHIN THE STRAITS

1603-1713

BY

JULIAN S. CORBETT

AUTHOR OF

'DRAKE AND THE TUDOR NAVY' 'THE SUCCESSORS OF DRAKE' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

*WITH A MAP*

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## P R E F A C E

THE substance of the present work has been given during the past year partly in lectures before the Senior and the Flag Officers' War Courses at Greenwich, and partly in the Ford Lectures on English History for 1903 at Oxford. It is now presented in a complete form on the not inappropriate occasion of the tercentenary of the capture of Gibraltar.

In its present shape it is designed in some measure as a continuation of the volumes in which I endeavoured to trace the development of the fleet and the naval art, and the history of naval operations under the Tudors. In approaching the Stuart period, however, it seemed wiser to restrict the field. There can be little doubt that much that is repellent in our naval histories is due to the vast arena they attempt to fill. In the effort to be complete they swing us to and fro from end to end of the earth, till we lose the sense of continuity, fail to seize any underlying principles, and sink bewildered in a chaos of facts with no apparent connection and no defined progression. It is in the seventeenth century that this complexity begins to make itself felt, and discretion therefore suggested the desirability of seeking a leading line of development, and following it with as little distraction as possible.

During the Stuart period two such lines present them-

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selves—the one our struggle for maritime supremacy with the Dutch, and the other the rise of our Mediterranean power. Both exactly cover the period in question—from the death of Elizabeth in 1603 to the Peace of Utrecht in 1713—and both would serve. But there can be little doubt as to which is the more closely woven into the matter in hand, and which is of the deeper and more lasting interest. The struggle with the Dutch, though at the time it absorbed most of the attention and the heaviest effort, was, after all, but an episode in our naval history. It was an episode, it is true, of the gravest import, but with the wisdom of fuller experience we can now see that from the essence of things it could only have ended in one way. In the Mediterranean, on the other hand, we have to deal with a question that is always open, with history that we are living to-day, and with conditions which continued and remain the most vital preoccupation of the higher naval strategy.

Once to grasp the Mediterranean point of view is to be dominated by its fascination. It gives us a light by which we see the British Empire standing on the same base as did the greatest empires of the past, and buttressed by the inviolability of her oceanic position more strongly than the most enduring of them all. No less inspiring a thought could embolden a student to relate the history of the Stuart navy without touching the Dutch wars or the foundation of our oversea dominions. For this is what has been attempted except in so far as those two secondary aspects of the time modified or influenced what I venture to regard as the primary and central movement. The method has at least the advantage of affording us a fresh point of view. It is from the standpoint of the struggle with Holland and our colonial expansion that naval historians, and indeed others, have almost uni-

versally depicted the time, and it should be no matter of surprise if, viewed from the Mediterranean, it assumes an aspect in some points so startling in its novelty as to arouse a suspicion of mirage. Events which seemed but the most trifling episodes appear as links in a mighty chain, reputations that stood high sink low, and others almost forgotten lift their heads, while judgments that have long passed into commonplace seem on all sides to demand revision.

Yet I cannot doubt that any one who can frankly clear himself of the insular standpoint and view the scene from the ancient centre of dominion will see it much as I have endeavoured to paint it, and will feel that, seen from any other side, its true proportions must be missed and half its fascination lost. Nor is this all. For I am bold to hope that by this means he will find in Stuart times a lamp that will light up much that is dark in later ages, that will even touch Nelson with a new radiance, and perhaps reveal more clearly why it is that our Mediterranean Fleet stands to-day in the eyes of Europe as the symbol and measure of British power.

The attempt to show how largely the position of England in Europe depended on the possibilities of fleet action in the Mediterranean necessarily involves the carrying along of an enormous weight of military and diplomatic history—history, moreover, that for the most part is only to be found in its relation to naval pressure in the correspondence of generals, ministers, and diplomatists. The majority of historians have ever ignored the naval influence except where now and then their attention is aroused by the thunder of a great battle. But, more often than not, the important fact is that no battle took place, and again and again the effort to prevent a collision is the controlling feature of widespread political action.

As a rule, what did not happen is at least as important as what did, and it is perhaps mainly due to overlooking this truth that history has so largely ignored the sweeping change in the European system which accompanied the appearance of Great Britain in the Mediterranean.

So long as we have the sure hand of Dr. Gardiner to guide us the difficulty is not so great. Indeed I cannot adequately express my sense of obligation to his great work. But where it ends the chance of error in the mass of undigested correspondence that takes its place becomes almost overwhelming. Much guidance to authoritative sources is, however, fortunately at hand in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' which has infinitely lightened the labour, and particularly the articles of Professor Laughton, in which he has practically re-written the whole of our naval history in a way that few but naval students can adequately appreciate. My debt is also great to Mr. Firth, who is carrying on Dr. Gardiner's unfinished task, and who has generously placed at my disposal some invaluable material he has unearthed. Much too is owing to the works of Mr. Oppenheim and Mr. Tanner, whose 'Calendar of the Pepys MSS.' in Magdalene College, Cambridge, I have been permitted to use in proof by the kind consent of the Navy Records Society.

Finally my thanks are particularly due to Colonel Sir George Sydenham Clarke, K.C.M.G., R.E., from whose inspiring suggestions the idea of this work sprung, and whom I must gratefully call 'the only begetter of these ensuing' pages.

J. S. C.

November 1903

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MAP TO ILLUSTRATE BRITISH ACTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN  
FROM 1603 TO 1713 . . . . . *Frontispiece*

# ENGLAND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

## CHAPTER I

### THE MEDITERRANEAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

WHEN James I. succeeded Elizabeth, and England was still but one of the northern sea-powers, there stood at the extremity of the Gibraltar peninsula a sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady of Europa. Founded in an unknown past by the Moors, when Gibraltar Bay was the main inflow of Moslem invasion, it had grown in wealth and sanctity till, for those whose business was in the great waters, it became one of the most revered shrines in Europe. Every Catholic ship that passed saluted its miracle-working Madonna, and every heretic captain welcomed the glimmer of her unfading light that guided him through the Straits. Her altar glittered with costly gifts from commanders whom she had saved or helped; and before it hung great silver lamps, the offerings of world-renowned admirals, whose names symbolise for us the old domination of the Midland Sea. There was one from Giannandrea Doria himself, who was Don John of Austria's right hand at Lepanto; another from Fabrizio Colonna, of the great family of Papal admirals; a third from Don Martin de Padilla, Captain-General of the Galleys of Andalusia, to whom, in Cadiz Bay, Drake had first taught the bitter

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lesson of the broadside ship. That lesson was not yet fully learnt. Its deepest meaning was still dark. The galley powers continued to dominate the Mediterranean, and Our Lady of Europa still watched at its gates. But a day was coming when the thunder of Northern cannon should proclaim, so that all must hear, the truth of what Drake and his fellows had taught; when English seamen should lay rude hands on the hallowed shrine, and the lamps of the Dorias and Colonnas should be loot for the officers of Byng and Rooke. The story of how that came to pass is the story of the rise of England as a Mediterranean power.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of that power is one of the great facts of the seventeenth century. It was a time when much was attempted in European politics and almost everything failed. But England's bid for the domination of the Mediterranean was never got rid of, and it may perhaps dispute with the rise of Russia the claim to be the greatest and most permanent contribution of that strenuous epoch to the history of international relations. It is an abiding fact which, rightly seen, gives a living glow to a neglected period of naval history—a period which seems marked with little but confused and half-seen battles in the Narrow Seas with French and Dutch. Dazzled with the romantic brilliance with which time and literature have clothed the age that preceded it, we seek in the new period for the same attractions, and seek in vain. The great transition from oars to sails and the launching of English adventure upon the oceans give the Elizabethan days a fascination that none can miss. We have come to regard the time as the heroic age of our navy. It had indeed something Homeric in its sweep—something that makes the men and their arms loom large and dominate

<sup>1</sup> Lopez de Ayala, *Historia de Gibraltar*, cap. I, sec. 20.

the events they shaped. But when their work was done and they lay at rest amid their trophies, the tale begins to move upon another plane; its meaning and its interest are no less deep; but they must be sought on other lines. It is no longer with the great sailors whose romantic careers had taught them the secret of the sea that we are so much concerned, nor with the details of build and armament that went to compose the weapon of their choice. In type both ships and guns were already what they remained till steam and iron did for sails what sails had done for oars. The forging of the weapon and the making of the men who were its first masters no longer give the note. A deeper and a louder tone is sounding; for before us lie the mighty consequences of what they had done, the growth of the new naval science, and above all the undreamed-of change it brought about in the balance of European power.

It must always be with a sigh of weariness that we turn our backs on the Tudor days to face the colourless waste of the early Stuarts. At first sight there is no period in our naval history which appears so barren of interest or significance as the reign of James I. We have come to regard it as a time marked only by the decay of the national arm under the blight of what we now call Society, and by occasional commissions for its reorganisation that were dominated for good and evil by the party politics of the hour. There is but one expedition to relieve the dreary story of corrupt and inefficient administration and the efforts of earnest men to stop the downward course, and that expedition in its declared object was a contemptible failure. But this is not the whole story. There is a natural disposition to measure the importance of a phase of naval history in terms of the actions that were fought, and to forget that, besides

being a fighting machine, a powerful navy is also a powerful diplomatic asset. The silent pressure of naval power has been well represented as its most potent line of energy, and it is in this aspect that the Jacobean period will be seen to have been dignified with an event of the deepest importance. For that abortive expedition, besides its declared object, had one which was undeclared and which gave the keynote of the century. For it was the occasion on which, with the intention of influencing a European situation, the navy of England first appeared in the Mediterranean.

When we consider how often since that day the same thing has happened, and how often and how profoundly it has seemed to control the course of history, it is impossible not to be stirred by the significance of the event. It was the direct and most startling outcome of the completed transition. For some years men had understood what the new force meant upon the ocean. They had long seen that the strength which lay in the New World and in All the Indies must come at last into the hands of those who could command the oceanic highways; but it was a new and bewildering revelation to see what a change it foreshadowed for the Old World powers that lay around the Midland Sea.

For centuries the destinies of the civilised world had seemed to turn about the Mediterranean. Each power that had in its time dominated the main line of history had been a maritime power, and its fortunes had climbed or fallen with its force upon the waters where the three continents met. It was like the heart of the world; and even the barbarians, as they surged forward in their wandering, seemed ever to be pressing from the ends of the earth towards the same shining goal, as though their thirsting lips would find there the fountain of dominion.

So too the mediæval emperors, as they sat in the heart of Germany, knew they were no emperors till their feet were set on its brink, and one after another they exhausted their resources in unconscious efforts to reach it. So strong was its influence that those nations of the North whose shores were not washed by its waters seemed to lie out upon the fringe of Christendom—barely within the pale of European polity. As allies or subjects they might modify the action of the central powers by pressure in rear or flank; but, so long as the galley remained supreme, the Midland Sea was closed to them, and they could never come near enough to the centre of energy to take a commanding line of their own. But now all was changed. So soon as it was apparent that the galley, even in its ancient home, could not hold its own against the galleon, the Mediterranean ceased to be purely the centre of the world. It became also a highway into the heart of Europe. The strategic points upon which the world's history had pivoted so long were suddenly seen to lie open to the West, and the outcast fringe of nations, into whose lap the oceans were beginning to pour an immeasurable power, were no longer without the pale.

It is significant of how bewildering the revolution was that the Northern powers were not the first to see what it gave them. It was rather the old nations, whom it robbed of their pre-eminence, whose eyes were first opened. From the outset it became an abiding dread of Spain that an English or a Dutch sailing fleet would enter the Mediterranean and discover its power. Yet characteristically it was not Spain who made the first steps to meet the new situation. It is true that ever since the defeat of the Great Armada she had been trying with changing success to create a sailing navy of her own, but this was in view of the defence of her Atlantic trade.

In the Mediterranean she still relied mainly upon the galley fleets of her Italian provinces and the maritime republics that were her mercenaries. In this way, ever since Lepanto, she had been able to dominate her own end of the sea. The naval power of the Turk was broken, and the piratical states that lay along the north coast of Africa had ceased to be a serious danger. Within the Straits they could not by themselves contend with the Italian galley admirals, and without in the ocean, where the richest of the sea-borne trade now passed, they could not venture till they had learned the mystery of sails. It was they who first saw the opportunity and went to school to the English and Dutch.

In order to grasp the complex effects which arose out of the new conditions of maritime warfare, it is first necessary to have a clear view of how things stood in the Mediterranean. A glance at the map will show that strategically it is divided into two nearly equal areas by what came to be known as the Two Sicilies—that is, the island of Sicily itself, and the southern spread of the Italian peninsula, then occupied by the kingdom of Naples. In the eastern half and all its ramifications, the Turks and Venetians still contended for supremacy, and the contest was steadily going against the Christian power. Rhodes and Cyprus, so long the outposts of western influence, had never been recovered to Christendom. The effect of the battle of Lepanto had been merely to confine the Turkish power to the further half of the sea, and this it now dominated with its advanced naval station at Navarino on the western shores of the Morea. All that remained to check its power were the great island of Crete and some other scattered stations, where the decaying power of Venice still maintained the Cross with ever-failing strength. The western half was dominated by

Spain mainly through her possession of the Two Sicilies. Sardinia was also hers. Malta was under her protection, and there were established the dispossessed knights of Rhodes, still sharing with Venice the honour of holding the furthest outposts of Christendom against the Moslem.

The Spanish command of the western half, however, was not undisputed. The Barbary states, though no longer the formidable factor which they had been in the days of Barbarossa, were still active upon the sea, and from their main strongholds at Tunis and Algiers, both within the Spanish sphere, they continually disturbed it with their piracies. Indeed, as the Spanish maritime strength was slowly exhausted by the struggle with England, they had been fast recovering the power which Lepanto had shattered. In vain, during the last few years of the sixteenth century, the Pope had tried to set on foot another Holy League against their devastating activity. Spain would not respond, and without her nothing effective could be done. In 1601, however, he had succeeded. A powerful galley fleet, strong enough to have penetrated to Constantinople, was got together to surprise Algiers. All the Italian states except Venice joined Spain in the effort, and the command was again given to Giannandrea Doria, the evil genius of Christian naval power. As he had shown by his advice to Don John of Austria after Lepanto, and on other occasions when he was in chief command, he was a past master in the art of abortive campaigns, and this time he succeeded in doing absolutely nothing. He led his fleet to Algiers and brought it back to Messina without having struck a single blow. Two more attempts were made in the two following years, but with no more success, and the Barbary states grew more and more formidable on the

sea till every shore of the Spanish sphere was scarred with the marks of their raids.

These two main spheres, the Turkish and Spanish, which relate chiefly to the struggle between East and West, are not the only points of view from which the Mediterranean has to be considered. It has a secondary strategical aspect which bears more directly upon the European situation. From the middle of the sea two gulfs run up as it were towards the heart of the Continent, on either side of Italy. That on the west, where Genoa gave the only direct access to Savoy and the Spanish province of Lombardy, was dominated by the ancient republic which had been the great *condottiere* of the sea. With the Riviera and Corsica in her possession she was master of the situation, for France was as yet too weak upon the Mediterranean to exercise a counterbalancing influence from her Provençal ports. The dominating position of the place was fully recognised by the strategists of the time. For during the interminable struggle between Francis I. and Charles V. victory had always seemed to incline to the power that had control of Genoa. Though nominally independent, it was now practically a Spanish port—the vital point in the line of communication which bound Spain to the Austrian Hapsburgs and the Spanish Netherlands through her possessions in Northern Italy. Eastward of Italy lies the Adriatic, or, as it was then generally called, the Gulf of Venice; for Venice still claimed the same kind of right over it as did England in the Narrow Seas, and regarded it as a *mare clausum*. Here lay the disturbing factor in what would otherwise have been a simple problem of East and West. Venice in her semi-oriental spirit was usually on fair terms with the Porte. The mainspring of her policy was her Eastern trade, and this consideration

complicated her attitude to the Turks as much as that of Spain was complicated by an unwillingness to entirely crush a power which, though infidel and hostile, yet served as a counterpoise to Venice. For Venice in the Mediterranean had been the same obstacle to Spanish dominion as England had been in the ocean, and, in spite of every combination to crush her, her territory still spread a barrier between the two halves of the Hapsburg system which were now seeking to renew their lost solidarity.

It was the threat of this family dual alliance, which would go far to re-establish the empire of Charles V., that was the dominating fact in European politics, and it was just when its shadow was beginning to fall upon the nations that through its weak point in the Mediterranean the new sea power from the North was brought to bear upon it in a strangely romantic manner.

## CHAPTER II

### WARD AND THE BARBARY PIRATES

SOON after James had come to the throne there was haunting the alehouses of Plymouth a tattered seafaring man, a waif of humanity whose luck had cast him there, no one knew whence. His name was Ward, and he was said to be a Faversham man, a fisherman probably, who had taken to the high seas in the palmy days of privateering. He was known for a sullen, foul-mouthed, hard-drinking ruffian, who was seldom sober, and who would sit at his cups all day long and 'speak doggedly, complaining of his own crosses and cursing other men's luck,' quarrelsome too at his drink, yet always ready to take a cudgelling rather than fight. His occupation was gone, for the King had grown hard on privateering. In his eagerness to stand well with Spain and to preserve his hasty peace James had issued order after order calling in all letters of marque and bidding his seamen even in foreign service to return to their country. Deep and strong was the cursing all along the coast; but the orders were strictly enforced, and times at last grew so bad with Ward that he was forced to take service in the royal navy.

He shipped aboard his Majesty's pinnace 'Lion's Whelp,' then in commission with the Channel Guard. But here he was no better content. He was for ever grumbling over the hard fare and lack of drink, and lamenting the good times that were gone, 'when,' as he

is reported to have said, 'we might sing, swear, drab, and kill men as freely as your cakemakers do flies; when the whole sea was our empire where we robbed at will, and the world was our garden where we walked for sport.' With talk of this kind he set himself to work upon his shipmates, till one day, as they lay with the 'Golden Lion' at Portsmouth, he hinted to them that he knew a way to heal their ills. After much pressure he proceeded to tell them that a small bark which lay near them had been bought by a Catholic recusant, whose life had grown unbearable in England, and who, having sold his lands, was shipping all his worldly goods for France. Here he showed them their chance. They had but to board her suddenly at night, seize the treasure she contained, and be in clover again. The plot was soon hatched, some thirty of his shipmates agreeing to share the venture. It was settled that they should all ask leave for a frolic ashore, and then, such was the naval discipline of the time, when night came on they could steal off to the bark and help themselves to all they wanted, and the officers would never know they were not safe aboard. In an alehouse ashore the rascals elected Ward their captain, kneeling round him, tankards in hand, and all promised well. But, as ill-luck would have it, a friend of the recusant's had been struck with the ugly look of the gang, and advised him to get leave to stow his treasure on board the 'Golden Lion' till a fair wind came to put him beyond their reach. So it happened that, when Ward and his band seized the bark, they found nothing worth having but the dainties which the gentleman had provided for his voyage. On these they regaled themselves, cursing their luck and their captain till Ward saw them in better humour with their feasting. Then he quietly showed them it was impossible to draw back; there was nothing for it but the

high seas; and so he induced them to put out. All that was wanted was a ship to serve their turn, and by a clever trick he managed to seize one off Scilly. She was a Frenchman of eighty tons and five guns. Renaming her appropriately the 'Little John,' after Robin Hood's lieutenant, he put back into Plymouth Sound, and there he quickly found enough men of the old stamp to complete his crew. Thus equipped, he stood for the coast of Spain. Off St. Vincent he picked up another prize. In the Straits he got two or three more, and then with his little squadron he held away for Algiers.

To his disappointment, however, the Dey would not listen to his overtures. A short time before, a certain Captain Gifford, an Englishman in the service of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, resenting the Dey's behaviour about a prize he had brought in, had recklessly set it on fire in the midst of the harbour, and had so nearly succeeded in burning the whole Algerian fleet as to make the Dey swear vengeance on all Englishmen from that time forth. Ward, therefore, hastily retired to find a more cordial reception at Tunis. Though here, as at Algiers, the Porte was still represented by a Pacha, the practical dictator of the place at this time was a Turkish adventurer, called Kara Osman, whom the Janissaries had elected Bey, and against whom the Pacha was powerless. This man Ward was clever enough to gain by promising to prey on all Christians except Englishmen and to share the profits with him; and on this basis he received permission to use the port as his base and commence operations.

Algiers was not long in following suit. Shortly afterwards a famous pirate known as Simon Danzer, Dansker, or le Danseur, and already notorious for his depredations in all parts of the world, arrived in the Mediterranean

and was invited by the Dey to enter his service, which he agreed to do with the formidable squadron under his command. From these two men thus established in the most active centres of piracy the Barbary corsairs learned the new art of sailing warships, and under their Dutch and English masters progressed with a rapidity that could not long be ignored.<sup>1</sup>

During the later years of the Elizabethan war the Mediterranean from the Archipelago to the Straits had rung with the piracies of English merchantmen. Claims from all sides, and especially from the Venetians, were still being pressed upon James, and, though some of them may have been exaggerated or unfounded, there can be little doubt that the way roving privateers pressed their rights over Spanish goods in neutral ships was not always too regular. To have such a man as Ward, therefore, openly established at Tunis was an outrage not to be endured, and he had hardly been at work a year when the King of France found it necessary to send a special mission to Tunis to protest against what was going on. His envoy, having a firman of the Sultan to back his diplomacy and

<sup>1</sup> The details of Ward's career are from a work entitled *A true and certain report of the beginning, proceedings, overthrow, and now present state of Captains Ward and Dansker, the two late famous pirates; from their first setting forth to this present time, published by Andrew Barker, Master of a ship, who was taken by the confederates of Ward and by them sometime detained prisoner.* London, 1609, 4to. Black Letter (Brit. Mus. C. 27, c. 6). Barker, who is careful to give the names of his informants for what he did not himself see, is generally confirmed by Father Pierre Dan in his *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsairs*, a work he published in 1637, after returning from a mission to ransom captives at Algiers. Simon Danzer, he says, began his Algerian service about 1606. The date of Ward's mutiny is uncertain, but it is clear from Barker's report he must have been at Algiers at least four years before 1609. Dan says the Tunisians learnt the art of sails from an Englishman called Edward, but he was probably subsequent to Ward. According to Dan, Ward was at Tunis in June 1605 when M. de Breues was sent there by Henri IV. on the mission referred to below. (*Ibid.* pp. 165, 274.) Meteren, in his *Histoire des Pays Bas*, p. 667a, also says that Ward was first in the field.

secure him the support of the Pacha, was able to exact from Kara Osman a treaty providing that no English corsairs should be suffered to use the harbour.

But Ward was too valuable an ally for the treaty to be anything but a dead letter. His depredations continued on an ever increasing scale till finally he dared to invade the sacred preserve of the Venetians, and crowned his reputation by capturing, after a desperate fight, one of their renowned *galeazze di mercantia*. For size and richness these vessels were hardly second to the famous East Indian carracks of Lisbon. Ward's prize was of fifteen hundred tons and valued at two millions of ducats. At the zenith of his fame the English deserter was now living in all the state of a Bey, surrounded by scores of obsequious attendants and rolling in riches, so that no peer in England, as one who saw him said, 'did bear up his post in more dignity.' He armed his great prize and sent her out as flagship of his fleet; but, being overweighted with ordnance, she was lost in a storm with Captain Croston, his best man, and a hundred and fifty English hands. It was the turning point of his fortunes. Venturing again into the Adriatic to repair the loss, he was met by the Gulf squadron consisting of a score of galleys with a *galleasse* at its head, which the Venetians had despatched against him and which drove him from his station with the loss of two of his ships and a number more of his men. So severe was the blow that he had to confine himself to vessels trading to Cyprus and Alexandria, with gradually declining fortunes. By 1608 he had but two ships of his own left, and that year some fifty of his men deserted in the 'Little John.' Osman smelt treachery, and it was all Ward could do to save himself from disgrace. But so great was his reputation, he was soon able to restore his position. The following year he

was joined by three more English pirate leaders named James Bishop, Sakell or Sawkeld, and Jennings, and also about the same time by the famous Sir Francis Verney, who in the summer of 1608 had sold all that was left of his ancestral estates and disappeared beyond the seas. Others probably did the same; at all events, in the year after his reverse he was able to equip and man a squadron of fourteen sail, and seemed as formidable as ever.<sup>1</sup>

From Algiers Danzer, though not equally fortunate, had been equally active, and the Spaniards like the Venetians found it necessary to take serious steps to protect themselves. But, though galleys were well enough to keep command of the close waters of the Adriatic, they were useless against sailing ships in the open seas on either side of the Straits. Danzer, treating the coast-guard galleys with contempt, had intercepted high officials returning from Sicily, and venturing outside the Straits, as was the practice of the Algerines, he appeared off Cape St. Vincent with a mixed squadron of eighteen vessels. It was in 1608, just when the negotiations for a truce with the Dutch gave the Spanish Government breathing time, and they proceeded at once to reorganise the whole of their sailing navy. The northern or Biscayan division was remodelled under the name of the Cantabrian Squadron and assigned the duty of receiving the West Indian convoys at the Azores. Thus the galleons of the main Ocean Squadron were set free, and Don Luis Fajardo, who had recently been appointed to the command, set to work to form with them a fleet to sweep Danzer and Ward from the seas. At the time the King of Spain had on foot a great mobilisation of galleys which all Europe was watching, and of which no one knew the object, and,

<sup>1</sup> See Lord Admiral to Salisbury, Aug. 8, 1609, *S. P. Domestic*, xlvii. 71; *Verney Papers* (Camden Society), 95.

so long as Ward and Danzer were active, it could not go forward. Nothing could be more eloquent of the gravity with which the work of these two adventurers was regarded, or of the reality of the revolution they were working, than that it was found necessary to send against them the famous galleons of the Indian Guard with the Captain-General of the Ocean Sea at their head. That day in June 1609, when Fajardo put out from Cadiz to enter the Mediterranean for the first time with a fleet of broadside ships, marks a turning-point in naval history, and it was directly brought about by a Dutch corsair and a handful of deserters from the British navy.

Fajardo's force consisted of but eight ships of war and some light craft, but in Sicily he expected to meet a squadron under another famous English adventurer. This was Sir Anthony Shirley, the eldest of those three renowned brothers whose adventures at the Court of Persia were then in every one's mouth. After his failure as a privateer in the West Indies in Elizabeth's time he had gone under the patronage of Essex on a diplomatic mission to the 'Sophy,' and was now returned with his visionary brain full of a gigantic European coalition against the Turks. After visiting the chief Courts concerned he had reached Madrid, where, through the active furtherance of the Jesuits, he had been received with great favour by the weak-minded young King. He even expected people to believe, as he wrote in his autobiography, that he had been given for his purpose the supreme command of the Great Armada that was assembling, and whose mobilisation he persuaded himself was due to his own energy and influence. The truth seems to be that the only commission he ever had from the King was little more than that of privateer, with the indefinite title of Admiral of the Levant Seas. Indeed his appointment

would scarcely deserve notice were it not for its significance as a sign of the times. For it was an effort made by Spain herself to introduce English blood into the Mediterranean. As it fell out, little came of it. With his vague authority Shirley had proceeded to Italy early in 1607, and for two years had been wandering from port to port trying to get a fleet together and showing a special anxiety to induce English seamen to desert their ships and join his flag. By the summer of 1609 he had managed to form a small squadron, which he boasted to have numbered twenty-three sail and seven thousand men, but as yet he had done nothing; and in spite of his persuasive tongue and lavish hand he was beginning to be regarded as an impostor. His headquarters were at Palermo, where he was living like a Prince in the 'Arabian Nights,' and it was for this port therefore that Fajardo was bound in order to effect a junction.<sup>1</sup>

On his way he looked into Algiers, where apparently he expected to find Danzer, but he was gone. Weary of his employment or alarmed at the extensive naval preparations in Spain, the object of which was still a secret, he had already escaped from the Algerian service and shortly afterwards appeared with his squadron at Marseilles to make his peace and seek an asylum with the French King. Henry IV. was at the time absorbed with his vast plans for breaking down the threatening Hapsburg system, and with a watchful eye

<sup>1</sup> Meteren, *Hist. des Pays Bas*, 667b. He says Fajardo sailed 'en intention de se joindre à quelques autres navires sous la conduite de Thomas Shirley lesquels il pensait rencontrer à Palermo.' The brothers were often confused, but Thomas is not known to have been out of England at this time. See *The Shirley Brothers* (Roxburghe Club). On September 9, 1609, Anthony wrote that he was about to start for an unknown destination from Palermo with twenty-three ships and seven thousand men. In November he was said to have seven ships and to have done nothing. *Ibid.* p. 71.

on the Spanish mobilisation was ready enough to receive such men with open arms.<sup>1</sup> Not finding his man at Algiers, Fajardo took a cast up to Sardinia, on his way to effect his junction with Sir Anthony Shirley. There he fell in with a small squadron, which had been organised by a Frenchman of the old crusading stamp, and which deserves remembrance as the first recorded symptom that France too was stirred by the new movement. It was the Sieur de Beaulieu, a Poitevin gentleman, who, fired by the miseries of his fellow-countrymen on the seas, had fitted out at Havre a galleon and a pinnace as a scourge for piracy. He, or rather his captain, De Tor, had met already with considerable success and had apparently been joined by other vessels from Marseilles. From this man Fajardo heard that Danzer had been already received into the French service, and that it was useless to seek him further. The Frenchman, however, proposed that they should make a dash upon Tunis, and destroy the squadron that Ward, Bishop, Verney, and Kara Osman had gathered there for a cruise against the American treasure fleet. The proposal somewhat staggered Fajardo, who regarded the operation as impracticable, at least without the assistance of Shirley's squadron. On the Frenchman protesting, however, that he had been about to do it alone, Fajardo came round. Together they suddenly appeared in the Goleta, and there they found a squadron of war-ships almost ready for sea, some of which were of seven

<sup>1</sup> Meteren (*Histoire des Pays Bas*, 709a) says he was appointed Convoyeur or 'Waffer' of the French Levant convoy, and that while so serving he landed near Tunis, where he was captured and murdered in prison. There was another story, followed by Motley, that he was assassinated in Paris by a merchant he had robbed; but Meteren's account is supported by a letter of July 1611, from the Viceroy of Sicily to Philip III., saying he had been recently executed by Kara Osman in Tunis—a report which the Viceroy confirmed in April the following year. See *Documentos Inéditos*, xliv. 104, 224.

hundred tons, besides unarmed prizes, over thirty sail in all. They were lying under the guns of the fort, but the light craft were sent in at once, covered by the fire of the combined fleet. The result was a complete justification of the Frenchman's daring. The anchorage lay five leagues from the city, and, long before succour could arrive, the French and Spanish boats had fired the whole of the ships except two that they brought out.<sup>1</sup>

It was the heaviest blow that the pirates had received since Lepanto, and all Christendom rang with the exploit. Indeed, so entire was the satisfaction in Spain that she did nothing in the Mediterranean to complete the work. Instead of being allowed to proceed with the powerful force at his command, Fajardo was recalled to Cartagena, where the great galley fleet collected from all parts of the Spanish sphere was now completely mobilised. For months its gathering had been watched with growing anxiety from London to Venice, and at last its object was apparent. It was what has always been regarded by foreigners as one of the great mistakes of Spanish history that was on foot—the famous expulsion of the Moriscos. The descendants of the old Moorish population then formed an element that was unrivalled in the dominions of Spain for wealth, energy, and culture. Yet they were heretics, and the influence of the Church was sufficient to brand them as a danger and to force upon the King the heroic remedy of expelling them in mass. So instead of crushing the reviving sea power of the Moslems in the bud, Fajardo was employed in carrying to Barbary tens of thousands of Spanish subjects, to give a new impetus to the wealth and activity of the predatory

<sup>1</sup> This is the account given by Meteren, *op. cit.* p. 667c, who probably had it from a French source. See Dan, *Hist. de Barbarie*, 1637, p. 169 *et seq.* Spanish authorities seem, however, to ignore the French squadron and give the whole credit to Fajardo. See Duro, *Armada Española*, iii. 324.

states. It is possible that Shirley too was employed in the same field; he certainly struck no blow against the corsairs to mend his broken reputation. It was not till the following year that he hazarded an attempt, and then it was only to make a cruise in Turkish waters with results so feeble as to bring him into irretrievable contempt. In a vain hope of restoring his position he made his way back to Madrid, and there gradually sank into poverty and senility, associating with fugitive English Catholics, vapouring to the end, with his head as high as ever, of the vast schemes he had on foot, and teasing the Spanish Government with fantastic designs to crush the naval power of his own abandoned country.

The immediate effect of the Moriscos' expulsion was as disastrous as it was unforeseen. It led at once to the rise of Salee as a pirate port, and its launch upon its sinister career. Hitherto the Moslem corsairs had been practically confined to ports within the Straits, so that until the coming of Danzer the ocean trade had been fairly free from danger. But in a few months the Spaniards found that a number of their wealthy exiles had established a naval port on the ocean, buying and hiring ships from the North, till the seas about the mouth of the Straits began to swarm with corsairs more active, determined, and well equipped than those of Tunis and Algiers themselves. In vain they seized El Araish as a counterstroke; in vain they tried to block the neighbouring ports; all was useless. The galleons of the ocean had more than they could do to keep the Moriscos in check, and within the Straits the power of the corsairs was left to grow till, two years after Fajardo's victory, the seas of the Spanish sphere were almost impassable for trade, and its shores were being ravaged from end to end.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE DUKE OF OSUNA

It is at this moment that a new figure appears upon the scene, who was destined to save the situation for Christendom and to mark the second step in the Mediterranean transformation as Ward had marked the first. This man was Don Pedro Tellez Giron, third Duke of Osuna, a personality as far removed from the melodramatic English pirate as could well be conceived. Son of a viceroy of Naples and a grandee of Spain, he had been carefully educated at his father's court for a public career. He was a ripe Latin scholar, was deeply read in history, and, on leaving the University of Salamanca at the end of 1588, had distinguished himself by composing and reciting a funeral ode to the Invincible Armada. Having succeeded early to his rank and estates, he had gone, in 1602, as the fashion was, to serve his apprenticeship to war at the siege of Ostend. The Homeric contest between Ambrogio Spinola and Sir Francis Vere had earned for itself the name of the first school of arms in Europe, and thither young gentlemen ambitious of a soldier's reputation flocked, as scholars did to the universities of Bologna or Padua. So high was his rank that no post sufficiently exalted for him to accept could be found vacant in the Spanish army. He therefore had to content himself with serving as a volunteer, and in this capacity he attached himself to Spinola's brilliant brother,

Frederigo, with whom he had already formed a close friendship in Madrid.

It was a chance big with consequence. For it must have been in the strenuous young Admiral's company that he learnt those ideas on the importance of maritime power which Frederigo had so urgently pressed upon the Spanish Government, and of which he himself was destined to be so loud an exponent. And more than this. His first naval action sufficed to make him a convert to the new system against which his chief spent his life in vain resistance. For his introduction to warfare was to be present in that last fight amid the Zeeland shoals in which Frederigo fell, and in which, as the Dutch medal boasted, 'the ships made an end of the galleys.'<sup>1</sup> The impression made upon his mind was one he never forgot. It opened his eyes to the great secret; and though in Spain the action was trumpeted as a victory Osuna read its real meaning. From his chief living he had learnt how dominion lay on the sea, and from his death he had learnt how alone that dominion could be won.

The following year he seized the opportunity of the peace rejoicings in London to go over and study the English navy. There he won James's heart by the beauty and wit of his Latin conversation, for he had spoken the language fluently since he was nine years old.<sup>2</sup> Osuna's opinion of the King was not so flattering. 'If King James,' he said to the Spanish Ambassador, 'were less of a pedant and more of a politician, there would have been no peace.' Refusing any official position he was able to pursue his inquiries in freedom, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Successors of Drake*, cap. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Gregorio Leti gives an interesting account of how, with a view to diplomacy, he was taught Latin, between the ages of seven and nine, entirely from the *Colloquies of Erasmus*, without grammar or dictionary.

by his native sagacity quickly got at the root of the principles by which Hawkins and Drake had made the navy what it was. Returning to Flanders to complete his military education as a commander of horse, he let no opportunity slip of learning from Dutch and French authorities all he could on the subject of which his mind was full. Having served with great distinction, especially at the relief of Groll, where he crippled his right hand, he returned to Spain when the armistice was proclaimed in 1607. There he found a most flattering reception awaiting him, and received shortly afterwards a seat in the Privy Council and the Order of the Golden Fleece.

It was not, however, till some three years later that the opportunity came for making himself heard. The question of the appointment of a new viceroy for Sicily came before the Council, and Osuna seized the occasion to point out the high strategical importance of the island for the command of the Mediterranean and to speak his mind upon the shameful condition into which it had nevertheless been allowed to fall by the neglect of its naval forces. He showed that within the last thirty years the corsairs had landed and made havoc on its shores over eighty times, and that under existing conditions there was no prospect of an improvement. The Moslem forces at Tunis and Algiers were on the spot, while those of Spain were far away, and things were going from bad to worse. As it was, he said, the King was only sovereign of the territory which the guns of his forts could cover. 'The new Viceroy you are going to appoint,' he cried, 'will only go to be a spectator of the same things; he will only go as a Court newsman to record landings, burnings, and assaults.' Such a condition of affairs, he protested, could not continue, and there were but two courses by which it could be stopped—the King must either pay the corsairs

blackmail to leave the island in peace, or else make it the centre of such a naval force as would suffice from the commanding position it occupied to sweep them from the seas. It was seldom a King of Spain heard such home truths at his council table, and Osuna's prompt reward or punishment was that he received the appointment himself.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the spring of 1611 that he took up his memorable command. On his arrival he found assembling at Messina the whole available force at the Spanish disposal in the Italian seas—twelve galleys of the Neapolitan squadron, ten more from Genoa, five from Malta, while Sicily itself furnished seven—in all thirty-four, and others were expected from the Pope. In command was the Marquis of Santa-Cruz, son of the original commander-in-chief of the Great Armada, and almost the only galley admiral in the Spanish service who had not disgraced himself during the English war. It was his intention, with the powerful force at his disposal, to make a raid on the Barbary coast to secure a supply of galley-slaves. By September he managed to get ready for sea and make a dash for the Kerkenna Islands in the Gulf of Gabes, but he got possession of them only with considerable loss, and returned with five hundred wretched Arab fishermen and peasants to show for his costly campaign. To such a depth had naval warfare sunk in the Mediterranean under the influence of Giannandrea Doria.

More deeply confirmed in his ideas than ever by what he saw, Osuna was already at work. Pending arrange-

<sup>1</sup> Osuna's career may be followed in Captain Fernandez Duro's *El gran Duque de Osuna y su marina* (Madrid, 1885), and in the third volume of his *Armada Española*. A long series of documents relating to his Vice-royalty are in vols. xlv. to xlvii. of the *Documentos Inéditos*. The earliest authority is an Italian Life of him, by the Milanese historian, Gregorio Leti, published in 1699, from whom I have taken the details of his youthful career.

ments for beginning a sailing squadron, he laid down two galleys of his own, which he might use as he liked, to make a demonstration of his views. One thing he was bent on improving was the position of seamen. He had seen in England the effect of what Hawkins had brought about by persuading the Government to improve the pay and diet of naval crews, and in health, vigour, and discipline his vessels quickly became a shameful example to the King's. So remarkable was the influence of his reforming energy that he persuaded the Provincial Parliament to give him an extraordinary subsidy, with which he fitted out four more of the time-honoured craft. By the spring of 1612 he thus had six efficient galleys at his disposal, and with these he proceeded to hit his first direct blow. It fell on Kabilia, the nearest Tunisian port to Sicily, which his admiral, Don Otavio de Aragon, took and burnt. Returning to Sicily with his captured slaves, Don Otavio joined Santa-Cruz at Trapani at the west end of the island, and thence made a dash at Tunis itself. He had learned that the corsairs, having recovered from Fajardo's punishment, were again fitting out a strong squadron for a direct attack on the Spanish West Indian convoy. The surprise was an entire success. Nine or ten vessels were burnt at their moorings and some brigantines or small galleys captured. The blow was followed up by a productive cruise to the eastward. It was clear a new spirit was abroad, and the corsairs, stung to fury, resolved to nip it in the bud by a crushing blow upon Osuna's headquarters at Messina. With a powerful mixed fleet of ships and galleys, they too attempted a night surprise; but Osuna had already succeeded in bringing his influence to bear on the rabble of desperadoes and broken officers who regarded the Sicilian service as their Alsatia, and the pirates were flung back with the loss

of two ships, two galleys, three galleots, and some five hundred men.

The following spring the campaign opened equally energetically with an attempt to surprise Bizerta, where the corsairs, taught by bitter experience the vulnerability of Tunis as a naval station, were establishing a new one, with large docks and magazines, in anticipation of the latest French ideas. It is interesting to note that the place was found impregnable, though subsequently Don Otavio captured and destroyed Cherchel to the west of Algiers.<sup>1</sup> Later in the year, while cruising again to the eastward for intelligence of a large Turkish fleet reported to be at sea, he heard that a squadron of ten galleys had been detached to collect tribute in the Archipelago. These he sought out and found between Chios and Samos. Though inferior in numbers he was secure in the superior efficiency which Osuna's system gave him, and attacked without hesitation, with the result that he took five hundred prisoners, freed over a thousand Christian slaves, and brought back to Messina the Turkish flag-galley and six others as trophies of his victory.

It was as though Frederigo Spinola's spirit was stirring again, and galvanising the old system into new life. One exalted Spanish officer wrote enthusiastically to Philip that such galleys and such organisation had never been seen, and that Osuna's assiduous study of the art of war from its grammar upwards showed what a master of it he had become. This was true enough. His work, so far, was only preliminary to the main idea which his mastery of the art of war had taught him. What he had done with galleys he believed he could do fourfold

<sup>1</sup> Captain Fernandez Duro says the attack on Bizerta was successful and puts it in the preceding year (*Armada Española*, iii. 337). I have, however, followed Don Otavio de Aragon's own account of his exploits. See *Documentos Inéditos*, xlv. 88.

with ships. Still, a sailing fleet was not yet to be had. Fajardo with his ocean galleons was busy with Salee, seizing the port of Mehdiä close to it, and watching a Dutch squadron which was hovering on the coast. The Dutch were already beginning regularly to police the Straits, and Evertsen their admiral was suspected of intending a seizure himself. Yet Osuna saw no reason for delaying a more vigorous offensive, which his master Spinola and his studies of English methods had taught him to be the other great secret of naval warfare. He had already laid down two galleons which he meant to be the missionaries of his faith, and, taking a leaf out of the pirates' book, had secured the services of some French corsairs, the chief of whom was a Norman captain, the notorious Jacques Pierre. While under their direction he was bringing his ships to completion, he began urging on the Government at Madrid that, having seen what a mere handful of efficient and well-led galleys could do, the King of Spain should undertake a real campaign to finally crush the Moslem sea power. In answer to his appeal the Government sent him a score of galleys under Prince Philibert of Savoy, who for political reasons had just been made Captain-General of the Galleys of Spain, in succession to Doria. With those of Italy he mustered a fleet of fifty-five at Messina—big enough, as Osuna thought, to turn the Turks and corsairs out of every nest they held. But when he saw how Philibert's galleys contrasted with his own, his hopes fell. The Spanish taint was upon them all, and little could be expected. Even as Philibert lay immovable at Messina, the Turkish fleet made a raid on Malta under his very nose. It was from Navarino they had come, and a brilliant and successful reconnaissance of the port followed, during which the two Egyptian flag-galleys were captured just outside.

Full information of the Turkish movements was thus obtained. Philibert followed with his whole force, and then, quite in the style of Doria, finding no heart to attack or ability to maintain a blockade, he returned to Messina without firing a shot.

From that moment Osuna washed his hands of the King and his galleys, and resolved thenceforth to play his own game. In Flanders he had seen the little Dutch ships lying off the Spanish ports week after week and month after month, and closing them up, and here were all the King's galleys unable to watch a single harbour. By every device in his power he tried to get the Government to build him a little fleet of sailing vessels that he might show his master how the work should be done. As yet there was not sufficient confidence in the Northern notions, and the scheme fell through. Still, his own two galleons were ready, one of forty-six guns and the other of twenty, with a pinnace to attend them, and he sent them boldly into Egyptian waters. There they immediately captured a squadron of ten transports on their way from Alexandria to Constantinople. But so far from assisting him to get the sailing ships which he was begging of the King, his success only won him a reprimand. There was an old regulation forbidding any royal officer to fit out sailing ships for privateering. Osuna had technically broken it, and that was enough for Madrid. In vain he urged the importance of blockade, and of being able to keep the sea in winter; in vain he reminded his master that, unless he commanded the sea, he could never command the land. He pointed to the English ships still at Tunis, against which his galleys were useless, and argued that the unhappy regulation had been made before the corsairs had learnt to use broadside ships. 'When your Majesty,' he wrote, 'issued the order

that "round-ships" were not to be used, they did not know in Barbary so much as what a tartan was, and now Tunis alone has sent out more than eight-and-forty great ships.' All was useless. The Government, suspicious and conservative as ever, was inexorable.

But Osuna was not to be deterred. In 1616 his services were recognised by his promotion to the vice-royalty of Naples, and thence he continued his exertions. By the spring, besides five new galleons nearly completed—the 'Five Wounds' he called them—he had ready for sea a squadron of five other ships averaging over thirty-five guns and a large pinnace. All were equipped and organised on English lines. The sailors were no longer the mere drudges of the ship's company, but had been raised more to the standing of the soldiers, in berthing, food, clothing, and pay. Equally important was his bold reform in abolishing the dual captaincy, which was the curse of the Spanish service. Instead of a captain of the soldiers and a captain of the seamen, he appointed one officer who, as in England, had command of the whole ship. At the same time he imitated, and even went beyond, the English system of concentrating the main fighting power of the ships in their batteries. They became like the Northern warships in principle mobile gun-carriages, instead of relying for their offensive power chiefly upon marine infantry. In some of his latest galleons the gunners even outnumbered the ordinary seamen, and guns were carried of a heavier calibre than any admitted in the British navy. Indeed, so heavily were his vessels armed that it would seem the lower tiers could only be used in the finest weather; but this was a defect by no means unknown in the fleets he had taken as his model.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For details of Osuna's fleet as finally constituted, see *Documentos Inéditos*, xlv. 503. His latest and largest galleon was 'Nuestra Señora de

There remained the difficulty of finding an admiral. In Osuna's service was one Francisco de Ribera, a half-pay ensign, but what experience of the sea he had had, if any, we do not know. His seamanship may safely be set down to Jacques Pierre's tuition. In this man Osuna was destined to find the hand he wanted, and his was to be the distinction of being the first sailing admiral in the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> In the early part of the previous winter the corsairs' ships had swarmed so thick in the Neapolitan seas that trade had been brought to a standstill. Osuna in desperation had sent out Ribera with a galleon of thirty-six guns. He was at once attacked by two corsairs of superior force, but after a five hours' fight he beat them off at nightfall, and they would not await his invitation

la Concepcion,' of 6,000 *salmas* burden, which was about the same size as the 'Prince Royal' of 1,200 tons, the latest addition to the British navy (Guglielmotti, *La Marina Pontificia*, iv. 313, vii. 293). A comparison of their armament (by the light of Norton's *Usual Table for English Ordnance*, 1628) shows clearly Osuna's exaggeration of the new ideas.

'Concepcion'		'Prince Royal'	
2	50-pounders	2	cannon-perriers, 24-pounders.
14	35 "	6	demi-cannon, 30 "
30	25 "	12	culverin, 15-20 "
	2 demi-culverin	18	demi-culverin, 9-11 "
	2 perriers	13	sakers, 5 "

The 'Prince Royal' also carried four small breech-loading pieces; the secondary armament of the 'Concepcion' is not given. Thus the 'Concepcion' was a 50-gun ship (counting only the heavy muzzle-loading pieces, or 'ladle' pieces, as the Italians called them), and the 'Prince' was a 51-gun ship. But it will be seen that the weight of metal in the 'Concepcion' was far the heavier.

As to crews, the 'Concepcion's' complement was 54 officers and gentlemen, 66 gunners, 60 mariners, and 20 boys, or 200 in all. The normal complement of such a ship in England would be at least 500 men, of whom 40 would be gunners, 340 mariners, and 120 soldiers. The crew of the 'Concepcion' would probably be filled up with soldiers, who perhaps assisted in working the guns in the same way that the mariners did in the English service.

<sup>1</sup> Osuna had married Donna Catarina Henriquez de Ribera, daughter of the Adelantado-Mayor of Andalusia, but Francisco is not stated to have been her relation.

to renew the action next day. Passing on to Trapani he picked up his pinnace and two other vessels, ran across to Tunis, and cut out two ships from under the guns of the Goleta forts.<sup>1</sup> For Osuna this was enough. Ribera was given the command of the six vessels that were ready and sent off eastward to watch the Turkish galley fleet. As he was watering at Cyprus he heard that the Turkish Admiral was looking for him with forty-five galleys. Only too ready to be found, Ribera awaited their approach off Cape Celidon. On July 14 the Turks were seen approaching, and then was fought the battle which finally opened men's eyes to what Osuna was doing. For three days it raged, and every morning the Turks renewed the attack with increasing desperation. But all in vain. So crushing was Ribera's fire and so well disposed his vessels, that the galleys could never board, and during the third night they retired cut to pieces, leaving Ribera triumphant on the field he had chosen. Doubtless much of the success should be put to the credit of Jacques Pierre, whom Osuna began to treat with a familiar intimacy that shocked Spanish notions of propriety, but Ribera was the hero of the hour.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Documentos Inéditos*, 363.

<sup>2</sup> How Ribera managed to beat off so overwhelming a force is uncertain. He certainly divided his squadron into two groups, two vessels in reserve and the rest as a main body, but the formation of this group is not clear. Captain Duro says he formed them *uniendo las cuatro, proa con popa, ciñendo el viento con trinquete y gavia*, as though they were close-hauled under fore-courses and main top-sails in line ahead. If so, Ribera must have been quite in the first rank of his art; for up to this time there is no perfectly clear account of an action fought line ahead in close order. But, although Captain Duro's authority is very high, Ribera's despatch seems hardly capable of bearing the weight he places on it. Ribera says: 'When I saw them (the enemy) I made signal for the vessels to close (*de juntar bajeles*): having closed, I struck all sail and gave them orders that the vice-flagship, the "Carretina," and the "Urqueta" should keep together always; and if it were a dead calm *se diese cabo por los costados tres*, an expression which is far from clear. However, it was not calm; and after detailing his

The victory made the profoundest impression from the first. Irregular as it was, even the Spanish Court had to recognise it; and in spite of its having been fought under Osuna's private flag, contrary to the standing order against which he had protested in vain, Ribera was given the rank of Admiral and the coveted Cross of Santiago. Still it can hardly have been with unmixed satisfaction that the Spanish ministers contemplated the new force that Osuna had generated. The skill that gave it life was from the North, and not their own. If Osuna's success had been great against the time-honoured weapon of the Mediterranean, it only emphasised the growing anxiety for what it would mean should the Northern sea powers choose to assert themselves within the Straits; and it was while the poets were still singing Ribera's victory that the Spanish Government found itself face to face with the contingency they had so long dreaded.

other orders, he proceeds: 'These orders given, I made sail towards the Armada, and coming within cannon shot I furled sails except the foresail and main top-sail so as not to hinder the vessel being steered.' As there was wind on each day, the obscure order issued in view of a calm may be discarded. It seems Ribera kept steerage way the whole time, and in his advance he says: '*Yo me puse en cuerno derecho di mio bajeles y los lleve juntos como pudieron o si fueron Galeras.*' That is, 'I took my station on the extreme right of my vessels, and kept them as close as they could go, or as though they were galleys,' which seems to indicate nothing but the old line abreast.

## CHAPTER IV

### SIR WALTER RALEGH AND GENOA

To grasp the significance of the new situation it is necessary to turn for a moment to the state of Europe, as Ribera's shattered ships limped home from their victory. Ten years had not passed since the truce between Spain and Holland had ended the old wars in which Elizabeth and Philip II. had been the dominant figures, and already the nations were grouping themselves for that still mightier contest which in the name of religion was to scourge and rend the face of Europe for thirty years. On the Catholic side was seen the renewal of the old relations between the Spanish and Austrian branches of the Hapsburgs. Spain and the Empire were again in close alliance, and all there was to prevent their complete solidarity was on the one side Savoy, pressing upon the Lombard possessions of Spain and threatening the security of her submissive servant, Genoa; on the other Venice, planted astride the direct line of communication between the King of Spain and the Emperor, and entirely dominating the ports at the head of the Adriatic where the Empire touched the sea. As for the Protestants, a great league seemed to be forming round the British throne. Since the Princess of England had married the Elector Palatine, James I. had come to be recognised as the head of the Reformation, and he, with a well-meant intention of averting the threatening outbreak, was endeavouring to make a match between the

Prince of Wales and the Spanish Infanta. The negotiations were going far from briskly, and even James could not conceal from himself that his efforts might fail. Like Elizabeth, therefore, he was not averse to preparing for a rainy day by adding to his resources, while at the same time he spurred the reluctance of the Spanish Court by letting it feel the sting of his sea power. In English eyes the tender spot, which had been whipped so sore in the old days, was still the Indies and the Atlantic convoys, and Sir Walter Raleigh survived as the personification of the bygone policy. Ever since the accession he had been lying in the Tower. He was now released and was soon busy preparing an expedition which many believed was intended to revive the wild work of Drake's young days. It was certainly the hope and intention of Raleigh's anti-Spanish supporters that it should. The King, as certainly, was actuated by a desire to fill his empty coffers by peaceful discoveries and to jog the King of Spain's memory as to what a hostile England meant. It was exactly under these conditions that, forty years before, Drake had been allowed to sail on his famous raid into the Pacific.

But there were onlookers who saw a little more of the game. While the heirs of the Elizabethans were living still on the oceanic tradition, others had been watching what Ward and his like had been able to achieve for the corsairs in the Mediterranean, and the power they had driven Osuna to develop in self-defence. These men, the arch-intriguers of Europe, weary of the eternal repetition of the old moves, were hugging themselves with delight at the sight of a new piece on the board that bid fair to change the whole game. It was no longer only for the extremities of his vast empire that the King of Spain need tremble. Deep in the vitals of his system

they saw two points that were as much exposed to the action of the new power as his wide-spreading limbs. It was no longer a question of Cadiz and the Spanish Main, but of those old focal points of European polity, Genoa and Venice.

At both points the inward pressure of the two halves of the Hapsburg dominion had caused an eruption of hostilities. It was in the ever active crater of Savoy that the first explosion had occurred, and although in 1615 the Spanish Governor of Milan had found it necessary to come to an accommodation with his insignificant enemy, his chiefs at Madrid could not sit quiet under the humiliation of the peace to which he had committed them. He was recalled, and a hard-bitten veteran, Don Pedro de Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca, sent out in his place with a barely concealed intention that he should pick a new quarrel.<sup>1</sup> The turbulent Duke of Savoy, with his eyes always fixed on Genoa, was ready enough with French and English encouragement to begin again; and thus a kind of semi-official war was raging between him and the Spanish Governor of the Milanese. At the same time Venice was fighting Ferdinand of Styria, the heir-presumptive of the Austrian house of Hapsburg and the actual ruler of that portion of its dominions which stretched down to the Venetian frontier, feeling for the sea at Trieste and the other little ports of Carniola. Thus Savoy and Venice were engaged in what was in fact a joint struggle against the new Hapsburg alliance, and the two wars had fused into one. So galling, indeed,

<sup>1</sup> Don Pedro was at this time in his sixtieth year. He had served under Don John of Austria and Parma in the Netherlands, under the elder Santa-Cruz at Terceras in 1582, and had filled successively all the high naval offices in Spain, as Captain-General of the galleys of Naples, of the galleys of Spain, and of the Ocean Sea. To him also had been confided the chief direction of the expulsion of the Moriscos. See *Documentos Inéditos*, xcvi. p. 4, note.

became the action of the Venetians on the eastern frontier of Milan that Don Pedro de Toledo, when Osuna's fleet was about to sail against the Turks, had begged him to employ it in making a diversion against the Venetians instead. Osuna, bent on first forcing back the Moslems, had refused; but since Ribera's brilliant victory his hands were free, and moreover there were new and urgent reasons for compliance.

John of Barneveld, who was now the virtual dictator of Holland, with his usual broad perception, saw clearly where the keys of the great Catholic combination lay, and towards the end of the year 1616 news had reached Madrid that a powerful Dutch squadron with four thousand troops on board, under Count Ernest of Nassau, was about to sail for the Mediterranean, intended for the service of either Savoy or Venice. During the summer the Count had offered his services to the Signory of the Republic, and they had obtained permission from the States for him to levy three thousand men and sufficient transport to carry them to Venice. By the end of November they were all embarked and were waiting for a wind in the Texel and Brill.<sup>1</sup> The dreaded hour had come and the anxiety at Madrid was profound. During December despatch on despatch in duplicate and triplicate was sent to the Italian viceroys, telling them that at all costs the Dutch must not be allowed to enter the Adriatic, while Santa-Cruz was ordered to Gibraltar to stop them there. But Osuna could do little or nothing. His old ships were not yet recovered from the mauling of their three days' fight at Cyprus, and the new galleons were not yet ready for sea. As for doing anything with the galleys, he protested it was impossible to stop sailing ships with oared craft in winter, and presently came fresh orders that he

<sup>1</sup> *Carleton Letters*, pp. 54, 96, 101.

was not to try. Osuna was to direct all his efforts to reinforcing his colleague at Milan with troops, and to confine his naval action to closing all the South Italian ports so soon as the Dutch had passed, in order to cut off the Venetian food supplies. All Naples and Sicily were resounding with preparations for the rescue of Milan and the relief of Gradisca, Ferdinand's frontier fortress at the head of the Adriatic, which the Venetians were besieging, and Osuna urged more strenuously than ever the necessity of sailing ships for the work he had been set to do. Face to face with its helplessness the Spanish Government was at last convinced. The Council of State sat solemnly on Osuna's despatches and resolved that he was right. 'Finally,' so their resolution ran, 'we are of opinion that it will be well to write to the Duke in appreciation of his zeal, and that it will be of more use and pertinence to spend money in fitting out broadside ships as being the best to resist the enemy, seeing that they themselves employ that kind of vessel; because galleys are of small service except in anticipation of a large galley Armada, of which there is now no question.' Thus at last did the inert Spanish Government declare its first official recognition of the naval revolution to which for years it had so obstinately shut its eyes.<sup>1</sup>

But the danger did not end with Holland. There was more and worse behind. Raleigh's expedition was slowly approaching completion. In vain Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador in London, had exhausted his almost hypnotic influence over the King in trying to stop it, and no one could tell what it was really intended to do. James was chafing more than ever over the cool reception his marriage overtures had met with in Spain; Winwood,

<sup>1</sup> See 'Consulta de oficio del Consejo de Estado,' Madrid, January 17, 1617. *Documentos Inéditos*, xlv. No. 423.

his anti-Spanish foreign secretary, was forcing him further and further into the attitude of a Protestant hero; and whispers were afloat that not the Indies but Genoa was in jeopardy from Raleigh's fleet.

While Nassau lay in the Texel, Lionello, the Venetian Ambassador in London, noticed that Scarnafissi, his colleague from Savoy, was continually in mysterious communication with the King and Winwood. Something of deep importance was clearly in the wind, and Lionello pressed Scarnafissi to take him into his confidence. Under the most solemn promises of secrecy, which Lionello promptly broke, the Savoyard revealed that he was proposing to the King, with Winwood's support, that Raleigh, instead of being sent to the Indies, should be reinforced with some of the King's ships, and then, in concert with some Dutch and French vessels, should enter the Mediterranean and surprise Genoa. Already Lord Rich had been permitted to fit out two privateers under the flag of Savoy; at this time, moreover, James was taking active diplomatic action in the Duke's favour; and during January 1617 he continued, so Scarnafissi said, to regard the scheme with favour. Raleigh too, the Venetian Ambassador was assured, was quite ready to change his voyage of discovery into a raid on Genoa, and he was keeping his eye on him and his fleet, ready to act the moment that Venice decided to hoist her flag in the Mediterranean. So Lionello wrote to his Government on January 19, 1617. A week later he wrote again to say that Scarnafissi had seen the King on Sunday and had been referred to Winwood to discuss the details. Winwood had informed him that what the King wanted to be assured of was first the facility of the operation, and secondly what share of the plunder was to be his. Scarnafissi replied that success was assured,

and that, as to the booty, the Duke of Savoy only wished to satisfy the King, and all he had to do to enjoy the lion's share was to send a large enough force to secure it. Winwood then talked of mobilising sixteen sail of the royal navy besides Raleigh's eight, but that the envoy thought was too good to be true. Still he was hopeful. The next week, however, Lionello wrote that the scheme, so far at least as Raleigh was concerned, had fallen through. Without giving up his intention of sending naval assistance to Savoy, the King was resolved not to trust it to Raleigh's hands, mainly because his name would arouse too much opposition from Spain, but also because he could not be trusted with the plunder. So at least the ministers had told Scarnafissi. Lionello was not convinced. He believed that, once at sea, Raleigh would be found, after all, making for the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup>

Gondomar, too, was of the same opinion, and was still unsatisfied. At the end of March, when Raleigh's fleet was practically ready for sea, he was still pressing for some definite assurance from the King.<sup>2</sup> To quiet him, James promised to procure from Raleigh an exact statement of his force and his destination, and to take security from him before he sailed that he would not change it. The King's engaging frankness as to Raleigh's objective could only suggest that he was intended to do something quite different, and the threat hung heavily over Spanish counsels. All December and January Count Ernest of Nassau's troops had been lying wind-bound in the Dutch ports, and the Ocean galleons had been hanging in the Straits looking for his sails to appear every hour. Then, in consequence, it was believed, of a sudden failure of

<sup>1</sup> Lionello's despatches are printed in Edwards's *Life of Raleigh*, i. 579.

<sup>2</sup> Buckingham to Winwood, March 28, 1617. *Buckeuch MSS. (Hist. MSS. Com.)* vol. i. p. 189.

heart at Count Ernest's strength, they had been recalled to Cadiz, but only to be ordered out again on news that the Hollanders on February 11 had actually sailed. The Ocean squadron was this time reinforced from the China and West Indian fleets. 'So much,' wrote the British agent at Madrid, 'do they take to heart the going of those forces out of Holland into Italy.' Two days later it was known that the Straits had been left open precisely at the wrong time, and that the whole of the Dutch fleet had passed in one by one.<sup>1</sup> Still the Spanish galleons were kept where they were in spite of urgent calls on them elsewhere. No reason appears. All we know is that Gondomar had not yet got the details of Raleigh's project from the King, and that it was not till a month later that it was thought safe to leave the Straits unguarded.<sup>2</sup>

There need scarcely have been so much anxiety. Raleigh had certainly abandoned the idea before he sailed. Perhaps he had never seriously entertained it. Lionello's despatches leave it uncertain whether the proposal came originally from Raleigh or Scarnafissi, but it is extremely improbable that the idea can have commended itself to the Elizabethan. There is no indication as yet that the leaders of English naval thought divined the great future that lay before them in the Mediterranean, and Raleigh himself, as we know from his own pen, did not believe that anything could be gained by supporting so insignificant a prince as the Duke of Savoy. For once his prophetic insight was at fault. He believed Savoy could never be more than a vassal to either France or Spain,

<sup>1</sup> *Carleton Letters*, pp. 96, 101. Cottington to Winwood, March 23, 1617, *Buccleuch MSS.* i. 187. According to De Jonghe, Nassau sailed on March 2, 1617 (n.s.), and arrived on April 4 (*Nederland in Venetie*, p. 69).

<sup>2</sup> 'Relacion de los navios de la Armada del Mar Oceano, &c.' in Duro's *Armada Española*, iii. 365.

and failing to appreciate the peculiar strategic and diplomatic strength of its position, he could not dream that it was to her that the most coveted prize of Christendom was to fall, and that one day a son of her house would sit on the throne of the Cæsars, with the Pope himself between his knees. It is therefore unlikely he ever entertained the idea favourably, and even if he did he probably rejected it on strategic grounds. Since his failures as an admiral he had devoted much time to the study of naval science, and he can hardly have missed detecting the weak point of the design. Sir William Monson, the last of the true Elizabethan admirals, shortly afterwards laid it down that the capture of Genoa was impossible without the previous acquisition of an advanced naval base in the Mediterranean, and there is no reason to believe that Raleigh was not sagacious enough to share this view. Further, it is now practically certain that if Raleigh was really bent on striking Spain a blow, it was in the way that naturally commended itself to a man of the Elizabethan school. During his last months in England he was undoubtedly considering an attack on the Spanish treasure fleet in concert with French privateers, and one of his chief captains was the notorious Sir John Fearn, who only five years before had been cruising off Cape St. Vincent at the head of a pirate squadron and consorting with the most active corsairs of the time.<sup>1</sup>

To be sure Raleigh's admirers will still dispute his piratical intentions, mainly, as it seems, because such things are now regarded as discreditable. But it was not so then. Such moves were at that time the stock-in-trade of foreign politics—no more to be reprehended than is a secret treaty now. We have seen how King James himself, merely to add weight to his diplomacy, could calmly

<sup>1</sup> *S. P. Dom.* lxx. 16, i. Examination of John Collever, July 5, 1611.

consider the seizure and plunder of a friendly European port. It is even possible he was privy to Raleigh's communications with France. Raleigh, even in his last solemn declaration at the gate of death, did not deny that some such communication had been made. All he said was, 'I never had any plot or practice with the French directly or indirectly, nor with any other prince or state, unknown to the King.' Barneveld was pressing James to do something, as the Dutch themselves had done, to check the development of the great Catholic combination; and if the worried King gave Raleigh orders not to annoy the Spaniards, it was only because Gondomar's overbearing personality wrung them from him. If Raleigh refused to treat the diplomatic prohibition as Drake used to do, it was rather because age, sorrow, and imprisonment had broken his spirit and destroyed his power of command, than because he did not think it right. There was excuse enough and to spare. Spain had been persistently violating the peace by treating every Englishman who appeared in American waters as an enemy. If he had made bold reprisal as Drake had done, no one would have blamed him, and least of all his own conscience. In any case it is certain that many of the men of most sound and sober judgment in England regarded it as an almost sacred duty to break James's faint-hearted peace and force on a renewal of the war before Spain had time to recover her strength. The old dog in the manger was showing herself incorrigible, and we must not forget it was the Reformation and the freedom of the New World that were at stake.

Still opinions will continue to differ on the ethics of these abortive projects. Yet, whatever we may think of them, they were innocence itself compared with the cup which the Spanish governors in Italy were even then

brewing for Venice. In her Mediterranean policy Spain for the time seemed cowed by her inability to prevent the long-feared blow from the North. For all she could do it might be doubled and redoubled. No sooner indeed had Nassau's fleet sailed than the Venetian Ambassador at the Hague was applying to the States for another to transport three thousand more troops that Count Levenstein had raised in Germany for the Venetian service, and the British Ambassador by the King's orders was supporting his request.<sup>1</sup> It was clear that, with Venice thus free to renew her strength from the sea, Gradisca must fall. It was only a question of time and a long purse; and there was every prospect of the loss of the frontier fortress being followed by an expansion of the maritime republic, which would not only force back the Austrian Hapsburgs permanently from the Adriatic, but would end perhaps in the partition of the Spanish province of Milan between Venice and Savoy. The Hapsburg system would thus be sundered by an impassable gulf. Before such an outlook the heart of Spain misgave her. Recoiling before the rising storm upon the policy of her superseded Viceroy, she began to devote all her energies to restoring the ignominious peace which, before her eyes were opened, she had been so eager to break. At all hazards the door must be closed against the unwelcome intrusion of the Northern sea powers, and the opportune mediation of the Pope gave her the chance of saving her face. The mediation was accepted. Plenipotentiaries from the four contending parties assembled at Madrid in the spring of 1618, and it was thus faintly that the new force first made itself felt in the Mediterranean.

<sup>1</sup> *Carleton Letters*, pp. 96, 104, 145, 151, 162.

## CHAPTER V

### ENGLAND AND THE VENICE CONSPIRACY

For Spain to cry peace was one thing. For her viceroys to listen was another. Of all the mysteries of Italian history there is none more dramatic or more difficult to probe in all its dark recesses than what is known in Venice as the Spanish Conspiracy. Yet there is one broad feature in it that stands out clearly enough. Although it is one that in the fascination of more melodramatic details has been generally overlooked, it is nevertheless the only point in the strange incredible story which had a lasting significance. From out of the crowd of cloaked conspirators, the fevered riding to and fro, and the cries of tortured men, rises again the hand that beckoned England to her destinies in the Midland Sea. In her jeopardy Venice cried to England for her ships, and this time England heard.

The famous conspiracy is now recognised to have had two main aspects—the one, within Venice itself, akin to our own Gunpowder Plot, with mysterious strangers crowding the low taverns, whispers of secret stores of explosives, and sudden, silent executions—the other out in the Adriatic, where Osuna's new fleet was boldly challenging the ancient claims of the island city, preying on her commerce, and attacking her fleets. It was Osuna who lived in Venetian story as the ringleader of the whole plot, and his piratical familiar, Jacques Pierre, who was believed to have been its instigator. It was natural enough. For it

was in Osuna's declared policy of winning the sea, and in the fleet which, with the Norman corsair's help, he had at length created that the real danger lay, and not in the brainless bravos who, as they found to their cost, were but children in the hands of the Venetian police.

Early in the year 1617, when Raleigh's destination was still uncertain and Osuna had heard of Nassau's Dutch squadron that was on the point of sailing, no one knew whither, he had written to the King at Madrid saying that he would send the few ships he could get ready into the Adriatic to be on the look out; but, so as not to compromise the home Government, they should sail under his own private flag on pretence of cruising for pirates. On the same pretext he said he was seeking permission to buy some ships in France. At the same time he pointed out the importance of the rule of concentration, which Drake had forced on the English Government in 1588, and begged that Santa-Cruz's squadron, which was then lying at Gibraltar, might be ordered to join Ribera at Brindisi. It is possible that it was at this time that his ambitious mind conceived the idea of making his master supreme in the Western Mediterranean by the seizure of Venice. At all events it is certain that on April 1 some such scheme was occupying his mind. He had heard the Venetians had sent out a squadron to meet their Dutch auxiliaries, of whom as yet he had no certain news, and he was writing to the King to explain how he was concentrating all the galleys and ships he could lay hands on to prevent the junction. He did not doubt the Gibraltar galleons would follow the Dutch if they passed, so as to join hands with his own admiral Ribera, and then all would be well. If the King would only place the matter in his hands with supreme command, he would undertake, he said, to make him master of the state and seas of Venice. All

he asked was ten of the seventeen galleons which Santa-Cruz had at Gibraltar, if no more could be spared, and a free hand, and then with the Italian galleys and his own galleons he would undertake that Venice should trouble Spain no more.

Meanwhile he ordered Ribera to Brindisi with eleven galleons, and directed the galleys to join him there. But long before they were ready the Venetian Gulf squadron appeared off the port and blockaded Ribera while the Dutch transports and their attendant warships passed in. Nothing daunted, however, Osuna pursued his purpose. Ribera was ordered back to Messina to effect a concentration with the Italian galleys and the Spanish galleons he expected from Gibraltar. But instead of the galleons came a despatch from the King in disapproval of his proposals. The design on Venice, he was assured, was an excellent idea, but unfortunately the Ocean galleons could not be spared. The Spanish seas were so thick with pirates of all nations that every available ship was needed to protect the coasts and the ocean trade. No other answer was possible. For, to add to all the other anxieties, it was just when Raleigh was on the point of leaving England, and every Spaniard believed he was going to turn pirate too. But this was not the worst that Osuna had to bear. He had also to learn that, in the face of her helplessness to resist the new naval pressure, Spain could no longer support the wars of her viceroys and had accepted the Pope's mediation. Peace negotiations, as we have seen, were about to open at Madrid, and, for fear of impeding them, there came an order to Osuna that he was not on any account to allow his fleet to enter the Adriatic. Here was a heavy check to all his dreams. His ships and galleys were at last ready to sail, the troops were on board, and there was the King's order undoing all

he had done. But Osuna was not yet beaten. He had not been humbled as yet, like Raleigh, with years of sorrow and imprisonment. Success and popularity had fixed his confidence. He knew what the naval situation demanded, and his masterful nature was not so easily thwarted by the wretched crew of politicians who surrounded his almost imbecile sovereign. He vowed, so the Venetian agent reported, that he would send his fleet into the Gulf in despite of the world, in despite of the King, and in despite of God. In such a temper an excuse for disobedience is seldom far to seek. It happened that the objectionable order was not in cypher as usual, and there he saw his way. So he calmly sat down and wrote to his master to inform him of the prohibition he had received, saying that as it was not in cypher he had no doubt it was a forgery, and therefore he was sending his whole force into the Gulf of Venice as originally ordered.

Meanwhile Nassau's troops had landed in Venice, and the combined Venetian and Dutch fleet had returned and struck an offensive blow before Osuna could move. The only weak point in the Venetian command of the Adriatic was at this time the sea power of the ancient city of Ragusa and the other Dalmatian ports, where the old nobility of Albania and the neighbouring countries, flying before the Turkish conquests, had established themselves in a kind of piratical independence and were known as the Uscocchi. It was in these men and in the Republic of Ragusa that the house of Austria sought an instrument to sap the Venetian dominion on the sea. Indeed it was to the Archduke Ferdinand's encouragement of the Uscocchi that the existing war was mainly due, and in concert with Osuna he was credited with an intention of bringing them into line for the threatened blow at Venice. As an answer to the move the Venetian admiral, Veniero,

had seized a small port close to Ragusa, and there the Gulf squadron had taken up its station as though with the intention of establishing a base from which the obnoxious neutral port could be seized, or at least rendered impotent. Thither, therefore, Osuna ordered his fleet so soon as the bulk of it was ready. The movement resulted in a mere reconnaissance. The Gulf squadron being inferior refused an action, and Osuna's admirals, finding it was expecting reinforcements, fell back to Brindisi to pick up the remainder of their force. In July they returned, but again the Venetians refused an action in the open and retired to Lessina. Here an engagement took place. It was quite indecisive, an artillery duel at long range; but, while Ribera blockaded the Venetians with his galleons, his galleys were able to intercept two of the famous *galeazze di mercantia* with their priceless cargoes. Though Ribera could not retain his station and was compelled to return to Brindisi, the affair was heralded as a victory, and Osuna claimed to have a set-off against Veniero's blockade of his own fleet at Brindisi, and to have successfully challenged the Venetian claim to the *mare clausum*. As a matter of fact the campaign had been a strategical success for the Venetians. They had covered the siege of Gradisca, retained their position against Ragusa, and were still in practical command of the Gulf, in so far as it was closed as a channel for reinforcements for the Archduke, and open for the support of their own operations in Carniola.

Still Osuna could be well content. Even the Spanish Court were coming round to his views. In answer to the objectionable order, he had presented them with an accomplished fact, and instead of a reprimand he had received directions, quite in the elastic modern style, to protect Spanish interests in the Adriatic. It was an

authority wide enough to excuse any violent measures that might prove successful, and he prepared for a new effort. The darkest part of the work was already well in hand. After mysterious overtures to the Venetian Ambassador at Naples, Jacques Pierre with a few kindred spirits had pretended to desert Osuna's service and had escaped to Venice. The Frenchman's unnatural eagerness to transfer his talents to the flag of St. Mark aroused some suspicion. He was not at once employed, but by pretending to betray Osuna's designs he retained his liberty, and was able to tamper with the adventurous rascality that was found in abundance among the Venetian hired troops and seamen. His idea appears to have been to raise at the favourable moment a military and perhaps a naval revolt; and so, as soon as the Neapolitan fleet was signalled, to turn against the Venetians the foreign mercenaries on whom they were relying. Though silently watched, he was meeting with no small success, and all was going well when Osuna was staggered by a peremptory order from Madrid to remove the whole of his ships instantly from the Adriatic. Instead of attacking Venice he was to pick up the stores and provisions he had gathered at Messina for the grand design, and to send them on to the Marquis of Santa-Cruz at Genoa. To add to his disgust he found at the same moment that his galley admiral had left Ribera in the lurch and brought all his vessels round to Messina without orders, unless they were some he had received direct from the Court. Osuna was furious. He wrote in hot protest to the King, not sparing to demonstrate the madness of the move to Genoa, which would leave the Venetians free to use their fleet against the Archduke and the Uscocchi, and expose the whole of the Neapolitan and Sicilian waters to the mercy of the Turks and corsairs. Still he would obey if

he could, but he feared it was quite possible that, as Ribera had now no galleys to tow his ships, the weather might prevent them getting out of the Adriatic in time to be of use. But his protests and his cunning were alike useless. Spain had no choice. The horizon beyond the Pyrenees had grown so threatening that at any moment it seemed that the whole weight of France might be thrown into the scale of Savoy; and to Genoa, threatened as she already was from the North Sea, must go all the strength Philip could scrape together. It was a situation which Spain had never had to face before. She was wholly unprepared to meet the double danger. There was but one way of escape. The Plenipotentiaries at Madrid hastily completed their work, and in September peace was signed between Spain, the Empire, Venice, and Savoy.

It was a peace no one believed in; Europe was too obviously on the eve of a universal conflagration. Ferdinand, whose savage persecution of his subjects had more than justified his education as the nurtured champion of the Jesuits, had been elected King of Protestant Bohemia. It was the throne to which the Elector Palatine, the most fiery representative of the Reformation militant, had always aspired with James's support to lift his English bride, and Ferdinand, as heir to all the Austrian dominions and practically Emperor elect, was as much by his position as his fanatic character the real head of the Catholic combination. So the glove was already thrown down. Every one was arming and every one scheming to secure a better position before the trumpets sounded.

To Spain the peace brought no relief from the special anxiety that was breathing upon her out of the Northern seas. Indeed it was taking a new form that the peace

was likely to aggravate rather than assuage. She had shown herself wholly unable to police effectively the great commercial routes that lay within her particular sphere of action, and both England and Holland, into whose hands was falling a continually increasing share of both the Levant and the Indian trade, were evincing an ominous disposition to do the work themselves. A Dutch squadron under Evertsen, we have seen, had already been causing anxiety as to its intentions on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and more drastic and extensive measures were on foot in Holland. In England the King, under pressure from the Levant and East Indian merchants, had appointed a royal Commission to inquire into the best method of breaking the power of the Barbary corsairs, and out of it came the first faint germ of the British Mediterranean Squadron. At the end of April 1617, when the Spanish Council was first considering Osuna's startling proposal, the Commission, after taking the evidence of the most experienced merchants and sea-captains available, had made its report. The main questions were whether or not the work should be undertaken in concert with Spain, and whether it were better to attempt the seizure of Algiers by a *coup de main* or to maintain a permanent squadron in the Mediterranean until the corsairs were hounded from the sea. The captains were unanimous in declaring Algiers impregnable to surprise, and in recommending a permanent squadron. They were equally unanimous in declining to act with Spaniards, or indeed with any nation except the Dutch, and they strongly advised that the assistance of the King of Spain should be confined to a contribution of money and the use of his ports, which they declared essential to the scheme as advanced bases. The Commission endorsed their ideas, and when a month later Sir John Digby went

as special ambassador to Spain with the marriage treaty in one hand, this was the peppery dish he carried in the other.

Nothing could well have been more repellent to the Spanish palate. An expedition against the Barbary corsairs had become the stock diplomatic formula for covering some ulterior and sinister design. Osuna had been and was still using it without so much as a smile, and to the Court of Spain Digby's proposals can have been read as nothing less than the threat of a naval demonstration to quicken its interest in James's marriage proposals. But in fact they had the appearance of something worse. The man who was at the back of the merchants in their pressure upon the English Government was Essex's old companion in arms, the Earl of Southampton. For us he lives as Shakespeare's far-sighted patron; but then he stood for that irresponsible and romantic policy of hot aggression against Spain which Essex had personified, and which we should now perhaps call 'jingoism.' To Gondomar there was no doubt of what such a leader meant. He wrote to his Government that the adventurous noble was bent, by means of war with Spain, on dethroning the Earl of Nottingham from where he sat as King Log of the navy, in order that he might reign in his stead, and that under the cloak of Algiers he was bent on a new attempt upon Genoa.

For Spain there was nothing to do but make the best of the situation, and, with as good a face as she could assume, she entered into negotiations for an international effort against the corsairs. But it is not surprising to find that, so soon as the negotiations were on foot, the Spanish Government, which, as we know, had been hanging back from Osuna's adventure, was once more encouraging

its intractable viceroy. Disgusted with the peace which frustrated his half-finished designs against Venice, and distracted with contradictory orders, Osuna had begged for leave of absence for himself, and for definite instructions for his fleet.<sup>1</sup> His ships were again in the Adriatic; for, on report that Levenstein and his three thousand Germans were on the point of sailing, he had promptly ordered it back to Brindisi. Meanwhile the Government at Madrid had received definite information that, in spite of the peace, Levenstein had sailed with eleven powerful ships, under the command of the Dutch admiral, Hildebrand Quast. As a matter of fact, an effort had been made by the Venetian agent at the Hague to stop him as he passed down Channel, but the order came just two days too late.<sup>2</sup> Of this the Spaniards were probably ignorant, and it was resolved that Osuna should be told to maintain the attitude he had taken up. He was, however, to use the greatest discretion, so as not to endanger the peace; while as for leave of absence the King himself wrote in flattering terms approving his zeal and saying that he could not be spared from his post.<sup>3</sup> A fortnight later he was definitely informed that he might prevent the Venetians permanently establishing themselves in their new station near Ragusa, but it must be done under his own flag and not the King's.

Before this despatch was received Ribera had been in collision with the Venetians. By Osuna's orders he had already taken his fifteen galleons up to Ragusa to watch their fleet. Whereupon, according to Ribera, the Venetian admiral had put to sea with eighteen galleons, twenty-eight galleys, and six galleasses, and attacked him

<sup>1</sup> October 13, 1617, *Doc. Inéd.* xlvi. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Carleton Letters*, pp. 163, 195.

<sup>3</sup> November 29, 1617. *Duro, Osuna e su marina: Appendix.*

without any provocation. The weather was fine enough, says Ribera, for both tiers of guns to be used, and a sharp action ensued. He was to leeward, and awaited the Venetian attack, which was made in their old crescent formation. Of his own tactics he says nothing except that he soon forced the oared ships to back hurriedly out of action, and that, on his concentrating his fire upon the enemy's flag galleon, the whole Venetian force retired. The Venetians denied that the provocation came from them, nor did they admit the victory which Ribera reported. He again claimed to have established command of the Gulf, but the admitted fact is that a storm prevented the renewal of the action and that Ribera was forced to run for shelter back to Brindisi, where before long he found himself once more blockaded by what he described as a mixed fleet of Venetian, Dutch, and English vessels under the flag of St. Mark. It is quite possible, as we shall see, that some English Levant merchantmen did actually form part of the Venetian admiral's force, and these vessels, owing to the dangerous condition of the seas through which they had to pass, were armed and equipped in all respects like men-of-war. Indeed, by both Spaniards and Italians, they were usually spoken of as galleons.

From this ignominious position it was necessary for Osuna to extricate his admiral with all speed. Definite though exaggerated news had just reached him that Levenstein with fifteen galleons had left Holland for Venice at the end of October, besides four transports that were to follow, and there was every prospect of his being as powerless to prevent their entering the Adriatic as he had been before. For this time the enemy was armed to the teeth, and, instead of stealing by as Nassau's ships had done, Levenstein was ready to fight his way through

in a compact fleet.<sup>1</sup> Again, therefore, Osuna cried to the King for help—for the return of the four galleons he had been compelled to detach as transports to fetch his troops back from Lombardy—for seven or eight of the galleons of the Ocean Guard—for the squadron of the galleys of Spain. With these he was certain he could deal a blow to Venice and its fleet which would give his master rest for many a day to come. But instead of help came fresh causes of anxiety. His plot against Venice was fast ripening. Jacques Pierre was making good progress. In August he had obtained an engagement to serve the Venetian State. Though he received no definite commission it was a great step forward, and Osuna was growing desperate. He wanted to have everything ready by April 1618, yet he could not get so much as a definite order from Spain, and his colleague in Sicily refused to co-operate with either ships or galleys. Appeal after appeal went off to Madrid as his difficulties increased, till, in the closing days of the year 1617, the last blow came and he heard that the Venetians had not only applied for leave to charter a squadron of twelve warships in Holland, but had sent a similar application to England. So long as he had only the Dutch to deal with he might hope to be strong enough still to carry out his project; but with both the new sea powers combining to save the old one, his grand scheme began to look almost hopeless. Weary of warning his Government, he lost all patience and took the bit between his teeth. Without so much as seeking the consent of the ministers he so deeply despised he took his own line, and began to act with all the airs of an independent prince. To the Archduke and to Spinola in Flanders he wrote off to urge them to charter for him in Holland a squadron of twelve of the largest and most

<sup>1</sup> *Carleton Letters*, p. 163.

heavily armed ships they could get; to Gondomar in London, to charter him eight of the renowned English merchantmen; and finally to King James himself, begging him not to refuse to the King of Spain what he had granted to the Venetians.<sup>1</sup>

There was need enough for haste. The Venetians were indeed at work in England, and with so much vigour that by January 20, 1618, they had received the necessary permission. In Holland they had had equal success. They had hoped, it is true, to get eight of the Dutch navy ships, but this the Government had refused on the ground that they were themselves fitting out a fleet of twenty sail against the pirates; but they allowed them to hire twelve merchant ships fitted for war, with the option of purchase.<sup>2</sup> By February people were ready to name the man who was to command the British contingent. Ostensibly an Italian was to be at its head, but this was only to save appearances. The real commander was to be an Englishman; some said Sir Henry Peyton, a favourite officer of Sir Horace Vere,<sup>3</sup> and some Captain Henry Mainwaring, a famous gentleman pirate, who had recently come in on a promise of pardon from the King.

He was a man entirely representative of his class—the well-born adventurers whose restless spirits or broken fortunes had driven them, upon the cessation of the war with Spain, to find employment upon the high seas or in the service of the Barbary states. A member of one of the oldest families in England—the Mainwarings of Peover, in Cheshire—he had taken to piracy—so he

<sup>1</sup> An Italian version of this letter is among Lord Calthorpe's MSS. (*Hist. MSS. Com.* ii. 456) vol. cxlvi. f. 312; a Spanish version in *Documentos Inéditos*, xlv. 271, dated Naples, Jan. 1, 1618.

<sup>2</sup> *Carleton Letters*, pp. 232, 235, 245.

<sup>3</sup> *Domestic Calendar*, 1613, p. 212.

assured the King—more by accident than design. Details of his piratical career are wanting, but it was certainly during the period when the English pirate leaders, under treaty with the Sultan of Morocco, had established a kind of base at Mamora or Mehdia, at the mouth of the Sebu river, just north of Salee. Ever since Fajardo's successful attack on the Goleta at Tunis, it had become their principal haunt.<sup>1</sup> In less than two years, according to a report made in 1611 by Sir Ferdinand Gorges, Governor of Plymouth, there were some forty sail of English pirates, with two thousand men, using the port and cruising in two main squadrons, under Sir John Fearne and a Captain Peter Croston or Kaston.<sup>2</sup> Mainwaring's name does not appear among the captains. Indeed, he had probably not yet taken to the trade; for, from a farewell ode written in his honour, it would appear that he did not sail from England till January 1613, when he set out with the intention of accompanying Sir Robert Shirley on his last embassy to Persia.<sup>3</sup> What the accident was that made him change diplomacy for piracy we do not know; but if we may believe his own report, he took so kindly to the new profession that he must soon have risen to a position which made him supreme at Mehdia. While he was there, he said, there were thirty sail of corsairs frequenting the place, and he would not allow one of them to go either in or out without their giving an engagement not to touch English vessels. Furthermore, he made a treaty with the Salee Moriscos, by which all their Christian prisoners were released, and he made it his business to rescue all English vessels he

<sup>1</sup> See Osuna's report, June 2, 1618, *Doc. Inéd.* xlv. 411.

<sup>2</sup> *S. P. Domestic*, lxx. 16, July 4, 1611.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Muses' Sacrifice*, by John Davies of Hereford, 1612. It would appear that, in 1614, Mainwaring's name was famous as a pirate as far as Caithness. See *Sir W. Monson's Voyage* in that year; *Churchill*, iii. 246.

found in 'Turkish' hands and protect them from molestation. Several 'Turkish' corsairs he actually captured, he says, one of which had been as high up the Thames as the Lea. He also claims to have made an arrangement with Tunis, by which British ships were to be exempt from its depredations, and he says the Bey had eaten bread and salt with him, and offered him half shares of all prizes and the freedom of his religion if he would enter his service. So great was his reputation that he claimed to have received similar invitations from the Dukes of Savoy and Guise and from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Spain, too, he tells us, finding herself unable to deal otherwise with the situation, approached him through the Duke of Medina-Sidonia with the offer of a pardon and a high command if he would betray Mehdia into Spanish hands. One midsummer day in the last year of his service, he tells us that with only two ships he fought five Spaniards all day and then beat them off, and thereupon received from Spain an offer of twenty thousand ducats a year to take command of the Andalusian squadron. But he was not to be tempted, and his depredations continued; nor was it till the Spaniards began to suspect that the Dutch had designs on Mehdia that they found energy to destroy his nest. Then, as we have seen, Fajardo with an overpowering force captured the place and made it a Spanish port. Whether Mainwaring was present at the time is not known, but as the place made practically no resistance it is probable that most of the leading corsairs were away cruising. It is even possible that, after all, Mainwaring arranged with Fajardo that they should be. At all events it was the end of his career as a Barbary corsair. The following year he was hovering in the North Sea while his friends negotiated his pardon, and early in 1616 they had succeeded in so far assuring it that he

was back in England settling claims with men he had robbed.<sup>1</sup>

If half he tells of himself is true, the reappearance of such a man in the Mediterranean with the official sanction of the British Government could only be viewed with the liveliest apprehension in Spain. It is no wonder then that the news of what was going on in England caused a profound sensation at Madrid. The Council of State was at its wit's end. It took them a week of anxious deliberation and prolonged debates before they could make up their minds what to reply to Osuna. Their last order to him had been to maintain his position; but in the face of the new difficulty their hearts once more began to fail them, and though at first some members were inclined to support his action they eventually changed their minds. The resolution they finally came to was that Osuna must be told it was useless to pursue his project against Venice. It was certain that in case of need the princes of Germany, the King of England, and the Dutch would come to her assistance; and as for disputing her claim to the Adriatic, Spain was not in a position to make war for such an object. True, Osuna had said he could maintain such a war for six months from his own resources; but it was now clear that, long before six months expired, the Venetians would have obtained assistance which would enable them to prolong hostilities for years. He must therefore give up all idea of coercing the Republic and remove his ships from Brindisi. They assured him that

<sup>1</sup> *Domestic Calendar*, 1611-18, pp. 298, 342, 353, 359. See also his *Discourse on Pirates* (signed 'Henry Maynnaringe'), *Brit. Mus. Reg.* 17, A. xlvii. Another copy is among the MSS. of Sir P. T. Mainwaring at Peover, *Hist. MSS. Com.* x. iv. 202. The copy in the Royal MSS. is probably that presented to the King. It is a very beautiful piece of calligraphy, elaborately illuminated, and it is interesting to note that it may be the work of the converted pirate's own hand, since John Davies, who addressed him as his favourite pupil, was a writing-master.

the object for which he had sent them there was no longer possible, for they had certain news that Levenstein had already passed in. To keep his ships where they were could do nothing but excite suspicion and foster that interference of the Northern powers which Spain wished particularly to avoid. To add to his vexation these orders were followed by a reprimand for his having presumed to correspond directly with a foreign prince, and by a pious rebuke for seeking help of heretics. Such paltriness brought the King the rough answer it deserved. 'They are not going to preach but to fight for you,' he said, and hotly justified all he had done. His anger availed him nothing. He was bluntly told to refit ten of his ships and send them to Gibraltar as a guard for the Straits.<sup>1</sup>

It was not likely that the Viceroy's ambition would allow him tamely to submit to such orders which at a blow would wreck all his schemes. They were fast coming to a head. Those mysterious strangers were already swarming in the Venetian taverns; Jacques Pierre was darkly at work among Levenstein's troops; and the hour of the Republic was at hand. In desperation Osuna pointed out to the King the madness of abandoning the Adriatic to his arch-enemy at such a moment, when so much had been done. He was sure the King could not have heard the news from England and Holland when his last orders were penned, and he had therefore taken on himself to delay their execution till he heard again. The orders were repeated, and so was his protest. So sure was he that they must be mistaken in Madrid about the fleets that were coming from the North that he had ventured still to delay the recall of his fleet from Brindisi, and even to reinforce it with four more

<sup>1</sup> *Documentos Inéditos*, Feb. 10, 14, 1618, vol. xlv. 277 *et seq.* Duro, *Osuna e su Marina: Appendix*, Feb. 17. April 14.

ships he had been hastily equipping at Naples. This was on May 8. In three weeks' time would be the great gala day at Venice, when her dominion over the Adriatic was celebrated by the annual ceremony in which the Doge went out in the great 'Bucentoro' to wed the Sea. Strangers from all lands were flocking then as now to see the pageant. The installation of a new and wealthy Doge happened to coincide with the world-famed festival. Venice had never been gayer and more crowded, and yet in the throngs of tourists and revellers there was a sinister element so numerous that it could not be entirely concealed. It was no wonder that Osuna was anxious and excited as the long prepared moment approached, and that he tore more fiercely than ever at the reins that were checking his restiveness from Madrid.

There they knew well enough all that Osuna knew, but for them it was a reason for drawing back and not for pressing on. As long before as March 21, Gondomar had sent them full particulars of the danger that was threatening. In Holland twelve ships of war under Admiral Melchior van den Kerkhoven with two thousand men were almost ready for sea, and in a month seven of the finest English merchantmen would sail to join them at Plymouth.<sup>1</sup> Besides these there were at least two other English ships which the Venetian Ambassador had chartered, and which were already in the Mediterranean. Gondomar was using his utmost efforts to thwart the Venetian action, but he knew he would not be able to stop the squadron sailing any more than he had been able to stop Raleigh. The Venetian Ambassador had been ordered to get the vessels off with the greatest possible speed, regardless of cost, and he had nearly half a million

<sup>1</sup> De Jonghe, *Nederland in Venetie*, p. 86. They sailed from the Texel May 18, 1618.

ducats at his disposal. Every English ship would carry besides its seamen seventy soldiers, and it was said the Low Country officer, Sir Henry Peyton, would command them. Gondomar could not get at the King. Buckingham, who was then all-powerful and violently anti-Spanish, would not let him. So there was no hope and they must prepare for the worst.<sup>1</sup>

That King James, for all his nervous caution, could permit such an expedition to be organised in his territory was scarcely less significant than if he had fitted out a squadron from the royal navy. It was impossible to read it otherwise than as a demonstration of where he meant to draw the line between peace and war. The Spanish Government were face to face at last with the prospect of an English fleet in the Mediterranean, acting in concert with the Dutch, the Venetians, and probably, as they thought, the Barbary corsairs; and whatever may have been their complicity in Osuna's schemes they knew it was time to drop them. It was this that had brought to the chafing Viceroy order after order to quit the Adriatic, and to remove his fleet from his own port at Brindisi, and it was this that had earned him the reprimand for writing directly to the English Court. Nothing could have been more ill-timed than his application to James for permission

<sup>1</sup> The schedule of ships which Gondomar sent included details of their crews, tonnage, armament, and rate of hiring. They were as follows:—

In England:	Tons.	Guns.
'The Centurion' . . . . .	250	26
'The Dragon' . . . . .	270	26
'The Abigail' . . . . .	250	26
'The Devil of Dunkirk' . . . . .	250	26
'The Hercules' . . . . .	300	28
'The Mathew' . . . . .	330	28
'The Royal Exchange' . . . . .	400	32
At Leghorn:		
'The Southampton' . . . . .	230	30
The Merchant Royal' . . . . .	450	32

*Documentos Inéditos*, xlv. 374.

to hire ships. It had served no purpose but to give the shifty King a complete answer to Gondomar's protests. In reply to his importunity the baffled Ambassador could get nothing better than an assurance that he too might hire ships if his master wanted them. To this the Spaniards had no retort, and the only hope of stopping the unwelcome intrusion was to persuade the Venetians, by a complete evacuation of the Adriatic, that it was unnecessary for them to seek English assistance.

But, severely as his Government was pressing him, Osuna could not bring himself to abandon the fruit of so much labour, as it hung almost within his reach. His reinforced fleet was at Brindisi ready to sail, the taverns of Venice were swollen with his agents. Apparently unsuspecting of her impending doom, her revels grew higher and higher, and every day Osuna expected from Madrid the word that would free his hand. Nearly a month before, Jacques Pierre had warned him that his procrastination was ruining their chances, and two days later the Frenchman's activity was stopped by his being ordered aboard the fleet with his most dangerous confederate. Still no word came from Madrid. On May 18 Osuna wrote again more urgently than ever. He had heard directly from Gondomar, and from the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, that the English and Dutch ships were on the point of sailing, and waited in confidence for the answer.

But already it was too late. The very day he penned the letter, as Venice awoke for another day's festivity, there was a sight in the Piazzetta that sent a shiver through every heart. On the gibbet between the famous columns were two corpses, and each hung by the leg in token that their crime was treason. While the horror was still fresh another body was added, this time awry with the marks

of torture. No one could tell what it meant. They only knew that suddenly all those sinister strangers had disappeared as mysteriously as they had assembled, and no one knew how. There were whispers of boats full of bodies, and dull splashes in the canals in the dead of night, and in the fleet Jacques Pierre and his confederate were swiftly put to death. The day for the fantastic marriage came, and the people assembled to celebrate it, but gloomily with anxious murmurs of some horrible danger narrowly escaped. Yet it had been escaped, and the wedding took place in all its splendour. The Doge was still lord of his bride, Osuna's fleet remained motionless at Brindisi, and a week later he was writing to say he had ordered Ribera to withdraw.<sup>1</sup>

To this hour the 'Spanish Conspiracy' remains a mystery. Its ramifications have baffled the historians of all countries. The parts of France, of Spain, of Osuna, and of Don Pedro de Toledo at Milan, are all uncertain. Yet all seemed to have a part. We know the ringleaders of the bravos in Venice were French, that some of them had been in Osuna's service, and their chief his most familiar instrument; we know that they were in communication with him and the Spanish Ambassador at Venice, that they expected an attack from Osuna's fleet, and that Osuna intended to make one at the moment they were prepared to act. But what the connection was no man can say. Probability would seem to suggest that the plot in Venice itself was some wild scheme concocted by mere desperadoes with a vague idea of mending their fortunes; that Osuna knew of it and fostered it through Don Pedro and Jacques Pierre so far as he saw in it an opportunity of coming in like a *deus ex machina* with his

<sup>1</sup> Duro, *Osuna e su Marina*: *Appendix*, May 30. For the best English account of the 'Spanish Conspiracy,' see Horatio Brown, *Venetian Studies*.

fleet, and making himself master of the situation; and that the Spanish Government were prepared to shut their eyes to what he was doing so long as it did not involve them in too great a danger. And herein lies the abiding interest of the melodramatic story. Until the Venetian Ambassador with King James's assent began hiring ships on the London Exchange, the Spanish Government had let Osuna go on. Then it became clear, not only that the English King would not permit the old strategic centre to pass under Spanish control, but that he knew he had the means to protect it in a way there was no resenting. Then it was that Spain drew back and was able to hold her turbulent officer long enough for Venice not only to crush treachery in her bosom but to provide herself with a force upon the sea against which Osuna was powerless. So to all the strange aspects of that famous plot we must add one more, and see in it the first occasion on which England by her new sea power laid a mastering hand upon the old centres of dominion and had dimly revealed to her her most potent line of political action.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE NAVY UNDER JAMES I.

AT first sight it may appear that too much importance has been attached to the apparently insignificant aid which James permitted the Venetians to obtain from his marine. To modern eyes the little squadron of merchant vessel, which came at the call of Venice in her hour of trial, must appear scarcely worth lifting from the oblivion into which it has fallen. Yet a clear apprehension of the idea of naval power which then prevailed will show that to the men of that time the sailing of those forgotten ships must have had a very deep significance. To begin with, it must be borne in mind that first-class merchantmen still formed an integral and recognised part of the national navy. Sailing war-fleets in all countries were usually more than half made up of armed merchant ships. It had even been the policy of the British Government, as well as of others, to foster the production of such vessels as composed the little squadron by a tonnage bounty, with the express intention that they should constitute an auxiliary fleet. For centuries such vessels had occupied in the scheme of national defence a similar place to that which was held by county militia ashore. As yet the system had shown no signs of falling into disfavour, but rather the reverse. In the last year of Elizabeth a scheme had been worked out under which the defence of the home waters was to be left almost entirely to squadrons of private men-of-war, in order that the whole royal

navy might be set free for an untrammelled and far-reaching offensive, and, as the young Osuna had seen, the war would have gained a new and irresistible impetus had not James brought it to so abrupt and premature a conclusion. It was therefore no mere filibustering expedition that had been on foot. In sanctioning the employment of first-class merchantmen by the Venetian Government, the King was deliberately parting with a section of his maritime force in order to protect an ally, and thereby preserve the balance of power in the Mediterranean.

Nor was this all. It might be said that, so far as the check to Spain was due to naval pressure, it was due to the action of the Dutch rather than to that of England. Indeed, they were rapidly outstripping their mistress in the naval art, and it is possible that at that moment their naval power was as great as hers. Ever since the last years of Elizabeth the royal navy had been declining in strength and temper; but it is by no means clear that this was generally known. England's prestige, as far as we can judge, stood as high as ever, and upon this she had been living. The fleet was one of the great sights of the country. Every foreign tourist of distinction went down to Rochester to see the royal ships, and wrote home glowing accounts of their numbers, strength, and splendour. The King held naval reviews in the sight of shouting thousands, and none but the keenest eye could tell that all was not as well as ever. But even if the real state of things was not fully known abroad, it mattered little, for by this time it was fully known at home, and the most threatening aspect of the little squadron that James had sanctioned was that its organisation coincided with a serious revival in England. It is therefore pro-

bable that the moral effect of the English demonstration had at least as much weight with the Mediterranean powers as the actual force exhibited by the Dutch.

If we were to seek for the point at which the navy began definitely to decline, we should probably find it about the time when death withdrew from it the influence of Hawkins and the old seamen admirals. It was then that, under men like Essex and Southampton, the navy became the fashion and fell into the hands of 'Society.' With a mere fine gentleman like Fulke Greville succeeding Hawkins, it was not likely that, however good and upright the new Treasurer's intentions might be, the seeds of corruption, which the old Plymouth captain had fought so long and astutely, should not begin to sprout anew. Nor from the Earl of Nottingham, the old Lord Admiral, was any assistance to be expected. With advancing years lethargy had crept fast upon him. When the peace was signed he was nearly seventy—a ripe old age as men went then—and his portrait shows senility stamped on every feature. In his best days as Lord Howard of Effingham his lofty personality and unblemished devotion had given the country the power of welding into an irresistible weapon all the fierce and unruly elements of her sea power. As the nominal head of her sea-bred captains his services were priceless. But neither as a seaman nor as an administrator was there anything very definite to his record. In the Great Armada year, on which his reputation mainly rests, his plan of campaign had been superseded by that of Drake, and he had been practically ordered to place his main fleet at his Vice-Admiral's disposal. In the actual fighting he had been chiefly distinguished by blundering unsupported into the middle of the Spanish fleet, and by his inexcusable turning aside from the crucial attack at Gravelines.

During the greater part of his administration, moreover, the navy had been practically managed by Lord Burghley and Hawkins, and so soon as their hands were removed it began to go down hill. As early as 1596 the expedition to Cadiz had demonstrated that the decay of his mental and physical qualities rendered Nottingham unfit for active command, and the condition of the fleet in the following year said as little for his powers of administration. A man always susceptible of being dominated by any strong personality with which he came in contact, he soon became but a child in the hands of the worthless men who succeeded in winning his confidence. The result was a rapid deterioration of the navy in every aspect, and all attempts to check it he querulously opposed. Convinced of the purity and loftiness of his own conduct, he would not believe that any man whose fortunes he had pushed could be less devoted than himself. To make matters more difficult, the worst offenders were connections of his own, and his belief in his order and in his family, in which the command of the navy had become almost hereditary, was sacred and inflexible. The result was an inevitable nepotism, but a nepotism so honest that he took any reflection on the general administration of the service as a personal attack. To remove him was the only hope for reform, and his position was practically unassailable. A great nobleman of lofty descent and venerable figure, he stood like a personification of Elizabethan glory, a last and cherished link with the heroic age; and it was not till Buckingham rose to his almost unprecedented position as a favourite that a force was found strong enough to drag the old Lord Admiral from his seat. For fifteen years after Elizabeth's death he remained an unwitting cloak to every disease that can infect a navy.

His evil genius and the main cause of all the trouble was Sir Robert Mansell, who stands without a rival in our naval history for malversation in his office. An officer of the new school, he was a gentleman of good family who had chosen the navy as a career from his youth, and the record of his service afloat was at least respectable. Though distantly connected with the Lord Admiral, he was one of Essex's men and had been knighted at Cadiz in 1596, though in what capacity he served is unknown. The following year he was captain of Essex's flag-ship during the Azores expedition, and afterwards was serving as his admiral on the Irish station. An accomplished courtier, he managed to survive the fall of his patron, and Nottingham's influence and devotion to the interests of his kinsmen was enough to keep him employed. When Nottingham's son-in-law, Leveson, was serving as Admiral of the Narrow Seas, Mansell was appointed his vice-admiral, and when Leveson in 1602 was given the command of the main fleet, Mansell succeeded him in the Channel. While he was so serving it had fallen to his lot to concert with the Dutch admiral a combined attempt to prevent Frederigo Spinola's second attempt to pass the Straits of Dover with a galley squadron, and the success of the operation had brought him some distinction. It was at all events enough for the Lord Admiral's influence and his own good looks to secure him the treasurership of the navy when Sir Fulke Greville retired in the first year of the new King's reign. The energy and power with which John Hawkins had filled the office, no less than the easy-going temper of the old Lord Admiral, had combined to make the Treasurer the practical head of the navy, and Mansell found himself free to play havoc with the service. The disease, which had been poisoning the whole system since Hawkins's

incorruptible and able hand had been withdrawn by death, soon began to appear like health beside the lamentable prostration into which Mansell rapidly reduced it. Money was squandered right and left while the efficiency of the fleet was as recklessly diminished. Promotion by purchase was established almost without disguise, and highly-paid officers multiplied beyond anything that had been known in the hottest days of the war. In one year, when only seven ships were in commission, there was a roster of three admirals and four vice-admirals, 'so that the navy was like an army of generals and colonels.'<sup>1</sup> From the top of the tree to the bottom peculation and embezzlement ran riot, and the swindling in the store-houses and dockyards was only equalled by the shameless claims which were made and allowed by the higher officers. No check was attempted, the Admiralty officers ceased to meet, Nottingham kept his eyes resolutely shut, and in four years Mansell had succeeded in wrecking the navy to such an extent that serious alarm was taken.

The first effort to check his career was in 1608. It was in this year, it will be remembered, that the Spanish navy was being reorganised in order to set free the galleons of the Ocean Guard for operations in the Mediterranean against the growing power of Ward and Danzer—operations which were intended to clear the ground for the vast naval mobilisation for the expulsion of the Moriscos. No one, however, at that time could guess the real object of the activity in the Spanish ports, and relations between the Courts of London and Madrid were so severely strained that the worst was feared. Under the pressure of the new alarm, which induced James to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with

<sup>1</sup> Oppenheim, *Administration of the Royal Navy*, p. 190.

the Dutch, he was also brought to grant a commission to inquire into the state of the navy, in spite of the powerful influence of the Howards.

The prime mover in the affair appears to have been Sir Robert Cotton, the famous antiquary and founder of the Cottonian Library. He was regarded as the most learned historical scholar of his time, but what his special interest in the navy was is not clear. It is interesting, however, to note that it may have been to some extent hereditary. The first Navy Commission of which we have any record owed its existence in a great measure to the fearless and incessant criticism of the administration made by a certain Sir Thomas Cotton, who served as Waster of the Wool Fleet under Henry VIII., and as a flag officer in succeeding reigns. When in the year 1583, on the eve of war with Spain, his prolonged agitation bore fruit in the great Commission which the Queen ordered to inquire into the state of the navy, it was he who with Sir Francis Drake and three others were appointed sub-commissioners to do all the work. Whether or not this Sir Thomas was related to Sir Robert, it was by him again the bulk of the work was done, for it fell to his part to draw up the report. The duty was discharged with his customary thoroughness, and the picture of corruption and incapacity it presented is amazing. Still more astonishing is the evidence on which it was based, and which still exists among Cotton's manuscripts in the British Museum. Yet less than nothing came of it. The Lord Admiral, who was nominally at the head of the Commission, had testified the importance he attached to it by never attending the sittings. Secure in the power of his family and the growing dulness of his conscience, he treated the whole proceeding with contempt, as he well knew he could. The damning report

was duly presented to the King, but the culprits suffered nothing worse than an oration from the royal lips. They were left free to continue on their evil path, and things went rapidly from bad to worse.

Four years later, when Spain and the Empire had definitely joined hands and the Protestant powers were drawing together in a still closer union, the indefatigable Cotton tried once more. The prospect of a great European war was again at its blackest. So strained indeed were the relations of James with Spain, that Digby, the British Ambassador at Madrid, had to report that the Council was actually debating a sudden attack upon the new Dutch colony in Virginia. Moreover, as politics then stood at the English Court, Cotton was able to secure the support of both Northampton and Rochester, the most powerful of the King's sycophants and the most determined opponents of the Howards. The result was that a new Commission was issued. This time the offenders took a still bolder line. The Commission contained a clause authorising the Commissioners 'to give orders for the due punishment of the offenders,' and they determined to dispute the King's authority to issue such a charge. To this end Mansell procured from Whitelocke, the latest authority on the prerogative, an opinion that the objectionable clause was *ultra vires*. By chance it reached the King's hands. His tenderness on such high matters was acute, and it stung him more sharply than the active decay of his navy. Both Mansell and Whitelocke were arrested and brought before the Council, and only escaped the Tower by a humble submission and apology. There unfortunately the matter ended. As far as is known the Commission never reported, and the Lord Admiral and his Treasurer continued their disastrous career unchecked. Nor was it till the action of the Duke of Osuna against

Venice and the utter collapse of the royal finances gave James a thorough fright that he was brought to his senses.

It was no sailor or politician who finally brought about the regeneration of the navy, but one of those plain men of business for whom England is always wont to cry out in her need. For some years past a new class of officials had been gathering round the King, taken no longer from the ranks of the nobility and gentry, but from the middle class that was daily growing in wealth and importance. Foremost among them was Sir Lionel Cranfield. He had begun life like a story-book, as the clever and diligent apprentice whose handsome face won him the hand of his master's daughter. With this early start he rapidly became a marked man in the City, and after distinguishing himself several times in the conduct of semi-official business with the Government he was introduced to the King by Northampton as a promising man of affairs. The promise was abundantly fulfilled. In 1615 he was knighted and made Master of the Requests. Now that Robert Cecil was dead he was without a rival as a financier. So honest and capable were his methods that he rapidly obtained a position that was unassailable, and shone like an angel sent from Heaven to drag both King and courtiers from the financial slough into which they had brought themselves. One after another he took the state departments in hand, searched them to the bottom, swept them clean, reorganised them on the soundest business principles, and started them afresh on healthy lines to which no one dared to take exception. Perhaps his most remarkable gift, seeing that he made no pretension to be a politician, was his power of getting rid of the men who had caused the mischief. It was a gift that was

likely to be tried to its utmost when it came to the Admiralty's turn to feel his hand.

The mere fact that a Commission had been issued was of course a severe blow to Howard's position. On the other hand it was likely to arouse the same determined opposition from his party which had already defeated two similar attempts. It was clear nothing would come of Cranfield's efforts unless the most powerful Court influence could be brought to back them. To this end Buckingham was approached. He had already reached a position in the King's favour which no intrigue could shake; he had just been created a marquis; nothing stood between him and complete domination but the serried ranks of the Howards, and on them he had declared open war. The suggestion that he was the proper person to take the Lord Admiral's place can hardly have been unwelcome, but he modestly declined it on the ground of his youth and inexperience. But the seed was sown and for the present that was enough. Cranfield had in his mind not merely reform, but such a revolution as would render the navy practically independent of the Lord Admiral's incapacity, and the Commission got to work with a light heart. Cranfield was of course a member, but he was far too deeply occupied with other departments to take an active part in its proceedings. The bulk of the work fell on John Coke, who had been Deputy-Treasurer and Paymaster of the Navy in Sir Fulke Greville's time, and had been his right hand in trying to curb the abuses which had crept into the service in Elizabeth's last days. Even then a navy captain could write to him, 'To say truth, the whole body is so corrupted as there is no sound part almost from the head to the foot; the great ones feed on the less, and enforce

them to steal both for themselves and their commanders.' Coke appears to have lost his post when by the Howard influence Greville was induced to resign in favour of Sir Robert Mansell, and he was no doubt ripe for an attack on the faction that had displaced him. He was supported by a most powerful Commission, composed of leading City merchants and shipowners, like Sir Thomas Smythe, Governor of the East India and Virginia companies, financiers like Sir John Wolstenholme, a farmer of the Customs, with a seasoning of experts from the Exchequer and practical shipbuilders. From a Commission so constructed there was no hope of escape. Mansell beat a hasty retreat. Before it could meet he obtained a promise of the Vice-Admiralship of England in place of Sir Richard Leveson, who had recently died, and sold the treasurership to a man after Cranfield's own heart, Sir William Russell, a leading Muscovy merchant.

By September the Commission had completed its report. It was of a most businesslike character, displaying no tendency to dwell upon the iniquities of the past, or to bring home to the old offenders what they so richly deserved. It was to the future it looked, and it exposed the lamentable condition into which the old system had fallen merely to emphasise the need of reform. In an interim report Coke had been able to show that of the forty-three vessels borne on the Navy List, fourteen, or one third, were unserviceable; three apparently did not even exist, though their upkeep was regularly paid for; while three others were useless till repaired. The navy was in fact weaker by six good ships than in the last year of Elizabeth. Yet the ordinary charge had risen to over 50,000*l.* a year, or more than it had been in some of the last years of the war. During this time nineteen new vessels had been ostensibly added to the navy, but of

these two had been begun under Fulke Greville, two had been bought, two were pinnaces, and most of the rest were reconstructions carried out in the most wasteful and inefficient manner. The only substantial addition had been the famous 'Prince Royal,' the largest ship ever designed for the navy. In their final report the Commissioners dealt with thirty-five vessels only. Of these, four were the useless galleys which had been built during Spinola's scare; nine, including four large galleons, were decayed beyond repair, leaving fifteen great ships and eleven smaller vessels which they considered might be made serviceable. It was an overwhelming exposure, but no worse than every one must have expected.

Of far greater interest were the proposals for the future. They were of the most drastic kind. First was laid down a minimum establishment of which the navy should consist. Thirty efficient vessels, the Commissioners considered, was all that could be hoped for at present, owing mainly to the heavy calls upon material and seamen by the increasing number of powerful merchantmen which were being built, and the ever widening area of British commerce. The thirty vessels they proposed to class as follows: Four 'ships royal' of over 800 tons, all of which already existed; fourteen 'great ships' between 600 and 800 tons, of which eight already existed, and six must be built to replace five decayed vessels and the four galleys; six 'middling ships' of 450 tons, of which three must be built to replace five decayed smaller ones; two 'small ships' of 350 tons, of which one must be built; and four pinnaces under 300 tons. This establishment, they pointed out, though numerically smaller than that of Elizabeth, yet exceeded it in total burden by over 3,000 tons. True, it left ten ships to be provided; but by building two a year they considered the standard might be reached in

five years, at a total cost of 30,000*l.* a year. In other words, they reported that the effective strength of the navy might be nearly doubled for little more than half what it had been costing.

The policy on which this programme was based was perfectly clear and well reasoned. It was no new thing; it merely carried to its logical conclusion the immemorial tradition which regarded the merchant marine as an integral part of the naval force of the kingdom. In those days sea-borne commerce was not regarded as a source of weakness, but of strength. The idea of commerce protection, as we understand it, was unborn. Beyond the limits of the Four Seas it was not held to be the province of the royal navy. Ocean-going merchantmen expected to protect themselves. Not only did they make no demand upon the royal ships, but, as a matter of course, accepted the position of an auxiliary navy. All therefore that was new in the Commissioners' project was the breadth of vision with which they conceived the whole as one great national force, and assigned to each branch of it its special functions. Small ships in the royal navy, they declared—beyond three or four for special service—were a mere waste, since whenever they were wanted they could be had from the merchants in any number. It was clearly their idea that the true function of the royal navy was to provide a squadron of powerful ships to form the backbone of the fighting fleet, and that the merchant marine should be looked to for the rest. Or, as we should put it now, the royal navy ought to be confined, or nearly so, to battleships, and the merchant marine should be relied on for cruisers and minor types when occasion arose for a larger number than were sufficient for the ordinary service of the Narrow Seas. There is in this policy a comprehensive grasp of the whole problem of

naval defence, such as had never yet been so clearly enunciated, or perhaps even so clearly conceived by any professional seaman. We see stamped upon the whole document the influence of men educated to statesmanship in the management of the great trading companies, of men accustomed to look their resources fairly in the face, to measure them without self-deception, and to husband and distribute them with a single eye to achieving the utmost return for the capital and energy invested. Small as was the force they proposed, judged by modern standards, they knew it was all the existing resources of the country could keep in a state of high efficiency, such as they were accustomed to in their own business, and they knew that if it was so kept it was enough; 'enough,' as they said, 'with private ships without foreign aid to encounter any Prince's sea forces.'

But they did not stop here. Merely to point out what should be done they knew was useless. To leave the old system intact was only to have their report shelved, and no sooner was it presented and well received than they prepared their final blow. The first sign of what was coming was a whisper that Buckingham had abandoned his modest attitude and was prepared to accept the office of Lord High Admiral jointly with the old Earl of Nottingham, and that the Prince of Wales had surrendered in Buckingham's favour the reversion of the office which had been granted him as Duke of York before his elder brother's death. Every one seemed to regard this as a preliminary to the graceful supersession of the unhappy old Admiral. But there was more behind. The news was followed immediately by an announcement that the Commissioners had offered the King to undertake the whole management of the Admiralty for 30,000*l.* a year, and to carry out the programme they had laid down,

if he would appoint them as a permanent Board. So revolutionary a proposal, which would reduce the Lord Admiral to the position of chairman of a board of directors, was more than Nottingham with his old-world aristocratic ideas could tolerate. He opposed it with his whole weight, and as it meant a clean sweep of all the old officers they too supported him fiercely. All was of no avail, for Buckingham was on the side of the reform. Coke had written him an ingenious letter explaining on behalf of the Commissioners that their proposals, so far from decreasing his power and dignity, would really enhance it, since under the new system the heads of departments, instead of being officially appointed by the King and for life, would now be but members of the Commission holding their appointments directly from the Lord Admiral and during his pleasure. Even the Commission itself depended for its existence solely on his protection and influence. 'Be pleased, my good Lord,' he urged, 'to consider that the Lord Admiral's greatness is not to have a market under him of base and unworthy people that betray the King's honour and his by the sale of places, havoc of provisions and ruins of ships, but his true and real greatness is the power and greatness of the King, the confidence of his favour, the trust of his service, and the reputation and flourishing state of the navy.' With these considerations Buckingham, whose zeal for a powerful navy was thoroughly genuine, was satisfied, and perhaps even relieved; and with his support it was an understood thing that the Commissioners' proposal would be accepted. It was the last blow to the old Lord Admiral. To be openly recognised as the mere figure-head that he had been for a quarter of a century was more than he could bear, and he readily availed himself of Buckingham's offer to buy him out.

So amidst the downfall of the Howard family fell the impressive figure which for years had been honoured as the personification of the naval glories of Elizabeth. When we remember what the Howard position had been, it is no less than astonishing to see how it crumbled at the touch of the modern commercial spirit. With a cynical directness Cranfield had gone on the principle that it is cheaper to buy out obstruction than to waste time and energy in getting it removed by force, and his policy proved a complete success. For so businesslike an attack the men of the Court were wholly unprepared, and the whole system went down before it smoothly like a pack of cards.

Nor was this the only sign of the times. As Elizabeth's old Lord Admiral was thus deferentially handed from his seat, there was played out the tragedy of the last of the Elizabethans. The Commissioners had hardly got to work when Sir Walter Raleigh returned from his melancholy failure in Guiana, and while Cranfield and his men laboured to disentangle the web of corruption, Gondomar was pressing for Raleigh's blood, as years before Mendoza had growled for Drake's. Every one knows how differently the two demands were met. Though Spain, through her viceroy at Naples, had been playing a game beside which Raleigh's was almost innocence, James had neither the art nor the courage to resist. Within a week of Nottingham's fall the successor of Elizabeth drank the last dregs of his long truckling to Spain, and Raleigh's body was lying headless on Tower Hill.

So the old era came to a close. Raleigh had rejected the principle of action in the Mediterranean in favour of a revival of the old ideas under which he had lived. He could not see that they were out of date, and martyrdom

with a kind of strange canonisation was his reward. At the same moment the new men were raising the navy from its ashes ready for the new career that was rapidly opening before it, and dimly grasping at the main line of its future energy. With Raleigh's death the oceanic era of Elizabeth passed away, and in its place the era of the Mediterranean was dawning.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NAVY AND THE PALATINATE

WITH Gondomar's tragic success Spanish diplomacy appeared triumphant. It seemed for the moment as though British policy was to be brought into complete subserviency to that of Spain. But, in truth, it was the turning of the leaf. Events were rapidly shaping themselves for the teaching of the new page, and public opinion, no less than statesmen's judgment, was ripening to give it life. The sacrifice of the last of the Elizabethans was more than Englishmen could endure. Unpopular as Raleigh had been all his life, in his dignified martyrdom he became the patron saint of the British creed—of the faith which combined in one dogma the spirit of the Reformation and the spirit of imperial expansion. The ring of the axe that had laid the old adventurer low re-awakened the old aggressive passion. The smouldering hatred of Spain blazed out again; the London mob vented its fury by an attack on the Spanish Embassy; and when Gondomar left the country—though he had ridden to the coast in a kind of triumph like a conqueror—it was to advise his master that on no account must he break with England.

It was wise counsel. The Bohemian revolution had already lit the spark of the Thirty Years' War. It was to James's son-in-law, the Prince Palatine, that the Bohemians were looking for support against the House of Austria, and in view of the new alliance between Philip

and the Emperor, and the suspicious naval activity in the Spanish ports, even James could not sit quiet. Mindful of Osuna's recent attempt, which might well be renewed, he had sent to inquire what were the intentions of Spain in regard to his son-in-law's dominions. The great fear of the Court of Madrid was that in the coming contest James would be pushed into the arms of the war party and finally declare himself the head of the Protestant Church militant. As things stood the dual alliance had little to fear, but with the English fleet thrown into the scale there was small doubt which way it would turn. As Gondomar pointed out, re-echoing Osuna's incessant cry, whoever was master at sea would soon be master ashore. The halting mobilisation which was then in progress had revealed that the Spanish navy, as he said, had never been so unready for war, while in a few weeks England could mobilise a powerful fleet, besides the swarm of privateers that would immediately cover the sea. The only policy for Spain was to keep James in a good humour, and to this end they should revive the negotiations for the marriage between the Prince of Wales and the Infanta. Nor was there any time to lose. Rival proposals were being made to James from Germany, Savoy, and France; and Dutch envoys were actually in London settling the strained relations which had arisen between the two countries in the East Indies, and urging the King to declare war on Spain.

Gondomar, in his eagerness to secure the neutrality of England, probably exaggerated the readiness of the royal navy. Still, he was not far wrong. In the six months that had elapsed since he left London, things had changed greatly for the better. Though Buckingham and the Commission were not officially appointed till February 1619, they had been diligently at work. The worst of the

abuses had been already cleaned up. Two new ships had been laid down in accordance with their programme, and they were making rapid progress. The King was giving his new servants a loyal, even enthusiastic support. When the new ships were complete, he went down to Deptford in state to see them launched. He performed the christening ceremony in person. Draining a bumper to the new Commissioners' health, he congratulated Buckingham on his choice of officers, and the officers on the beauty of the new vessels, on the rapidity of their building, and no less on the economical accounts they had offered for his inspection.<sup>1</sup> In his high satisfaction he broke quite away from the traditional nomenclature of the royal navy. The larger of the two vessels, 'a great ship' of the second rank, he named, in honour of the reforming Commissioners, 'The Reformation,' a name which was changed, perhaps in view of its doubtful meaning, to 'Constant Reformation.' The other, a ship of the third rank, he called in honour of the new Lord Admiral's *début*, 'Buckingham's Entrance,' a name which was afterwards changed, possibly as being too great a departure from custom, to 'Happy Entrance.' Two more ships of the same ratings were immediately laid down in their places, and everything promised that Buckingham's entrance was really happy, and the reformation likely to be constant.<sup>2</sup>

But this was not all to which Gondomar could point in support of his view that at all costs England and her

<sup>1</sup> Salvetti, Nov. 22, 1619. Chamberlain to Carleton, Nov. 13, *S.P. Dom.*

<sup>2</sup> In view of the difficult question of comparing English and foreign ship measurements, it is interesting to note that Salvetti says the two vessels were of 800 and 500 tons respectively, and 'we,' he adds, 'calculate the ton at 5 *salme* each.' The English official measurement was: 'Constant Reformation,' burden 564, ton or tonnage 752; 'Happy Entrance,' 437 and 582. They were usually rated at 750 and 580.

sea forces must be kept neutral. During the time the naval reorganisation had been going on much had occurred to give his opinion emphasis. Even before he left the kingdom in the summer of 1618, he had received an object lesson of how men of the new Commissioner's stamp could prepare a fleet. It must be remembered that this was the time when Osuna's contemplated design on Venice was ripening, and the encouragement which the Spanish Government had been secretly giving was suddenly changed to opposition by the news of what the Republic was doing in Holland and England. It was about the middle of January 1618 that the Venetian Ambassador in London got leave to charter eight men-of-war. On April 8, within three months, he went down to Deptford to see them off. He was received with a rousing salute and a grand luncheon, as the importance of the occasion demanded, and his smart little fleet dropped down the river to be ready for the first fair wind. On the 23rd they were well away and were expected to reach Gibraltar by May 1. It was under Sir John Peyton that they eventually sailed. Who the seaman commander was is not known, but it was not Mainwaring. At the last moment the Government felt that the reformed pirate, for all his repentance, was not to be trusted on the high seas, and he had to go to Venice overland. On the same day that the ships left Deptford the contingent of twelve sail, which the Venetian Ambassador had equipped in Holland, put to sea, and with it sailed a regular Dutch squadron of fourteen sail. It was intended, as was announced, to police the Straits against the Barbary corsairs, but there was small doubt its objective would be changed if occasion arose, and for Spain it was no less a cause for anxiety than the two hired

squadrons which were sailing openly under the flag of St. Mark.<sup>1</sup>

It was no wonder, then, that the Spanish Government was at its wit's end. During the whole time that the English squadron had been preparing, they had been bombarding Osuna with orders to quit the Adriatic, and as yet had received from him nothing but excuses for disobedience. Don Miguel de Vidazabal, one of the finest seamen in their service, who had recently been made vice-admiral of the Cantabrian Squadron, was watching the Straits with seven ships and two caravels. Whether to reinforce him or not with such vessels as the groaning mobilisation would allow became a subject of anxious debate in the Council. Three new galleons were sent him; but on June 18, before they had made up their minds to do more, the two Dutch squadrons were sighted from the top of the Rock. What had become of the English squadron, or why the Dutch had been so long on the way, is difficult to ascertain. The two contingents had certainly not joined hands, and Vidazabal felt justified in attacking, since the States admiral drew off and left the Venetian squadron to take its own course. The action lasted four hours, and when darkness separated the fleets Vidazabal had to report forty killed and thirty wounded, with the usual rider that the Dutch were believed to have suffered much more heavily. During the night he prepared to renew the action, but to his chagrin received an order from Santa-Cruz to the effect that his Majesty had resolved not to oppose the passage of the Venetian squadron. A week before, peremptory

<sup>1</sup> Salvetti's *News Letters*, April 18 to May 31, 1618, *Add. MSS.* 27962, vol. i. Salvetti was the London agent of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

orders to the same effect had been sent to Osuna, and at last he had obeyed.<sup>1</sup>

So far, then, the naval intervention of England and her ally in the Mediterranean had been a complete success. Venice was safe, and Spain's hand was forced. The extensive naval mobilisation for what was officially styled 'the Secret Expedition' had now to take definite shape. Whether or not it had been intended to back up Osuna's blow, if it had succeeded, is unknown. At any rate, it was no longer possible to cover such a design under the cloak of operations against the pirates. It was a game two could play, and the Northern powers had won the first point. There was every prospect of their continuing the match with ever increasing boldness and all the leading cards in their hand. In fact, the pirates whom Spain had nursed so long could no more serve as a mask for her ambition. They had become, by her own supineness, a handle for her enemies—a handle by which at any moment they could open wide the gate of the Mediterranean. It was clear that if Spain hoped to preserve the domination of her sphere, she must set herself with a single eye to removing the cause of offence. Within a week of Vidazabal's action an Algerian fleet was reported returning from a raid at Lanzerote in the Canaries. Vidazabal at once agreed with the admiral of the States squadron that was still lying in the Straits to join hands. Together they fell upon the corsairs, and in a few hours completely

<sup>1</sup> Duro, *Armada Española*, iii. 357, 498. It is probable that the English squadron had already passed the Straits, perhaps about June 10, as Salvetti expected; for on the 13th an urgent order was sent to Osuna to withdraw his fleet from Brindisi and send it to reinforce the fleet that was being mobilised against Algiers. This was the order he finally obeyed. On the other hand, there is a despatch of Osuna's dated July 24, saying that the English and Dutch have begun to enter the Adriatic (*Doc. Inéd.*). Possibly therefore, both the fleets had been detained by a long spell of foul weather and passed the Straits about the same time.

destroyed them. About the same time Osuna, who, since his designs on Venice were defeated, was throwing himself heart and soul into the destruction of the Mussulman sea power, sent his admiral, Don Otavio de Aragon, into Turkish waters, where he entered and played havoc in the Dardanelles. Another squadron made a successful raid on Bizerta, while similar activity was displayed by the King's galleys on the coast of Valencia. At length Spain seemed in earnest, and it was known she was mustering a great galley fleet from all parts of her dominions for the spring of 1619.

Still, in view of the war clouds that overhung Europe, no one could believe she had not some ulterior design, and least of all England. Under Gondomar's advice a special envoy had been sent to James to revive the marriage negotiations, and to get him to offer his mediation between Bohemia and the Empire. His vanity, which was always picturing him as the peacemaker of Europe, quickly swallowed the bait, and Spain thought herself safe. Philip immediately announced to the Archduke Albert, Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, that he had decided to give active support to his Austrian ally, and informed the Emperor himself, that he was ready to give him a large sum of money, and, if that did not suffice, troops should follow. This was at the opening of the year 1619. The news of the activity in the Spanish ports was becoming daily more ominous, and by the end of January every one had taken the alarm. Sir Dudley Carleton, the British Minister in Holland, sent over word that the rendezvous for the galley fleet had been discovered to be Messina. This place, from its remarkable strategical position, was the traditional point of concentration for the combined Christian fleets which had so often assembled to crush the Moslem sea power. Still

suspicion was in no way disarmed. Indeed, so central and well placed is the port for operations in any part of the Mediterranean, that nobody could be at ease. The Dutch were certain it portended what every one feared. 'It makes them judge,' wrote Carleton, 'that the storm will first fall on the Venetians by forcing a passage through the Gulf to Trieste in Istria, and after upon the Bohemians.'<sup>1</sup>

The real intention of the Spanish Council cannot be determined, even if they had definitely decided on any particular line of action. Ever since the death of the inflexible Philip II. they had pursued a policy of drift and vacillation, and were probably doing the same thing now. For James, in any case, it was unnecessary to come to a conclusion. He still had ready to his hand the weapon which would cut either way. It will be remembered that when Digby, in May 1617, had returned to Madrid to press the King's marriage proposals more firmly on Philip III., the goad he carried was a proposal for joint action by the leading sea powers—all of them hostile to Spain—against the Barbary pirates. His suggestion was that each of them should provide a squadron of twenty sail to act together for three years from April 1619. Little is known of the course of the negotiation.<sup>2</sup> France apparently was favourable, but the Dutch were not so sure. They had recently established diplomatic relations with the corsairs, and their consul at Algiers had succeeded in negotiating a treaty whereby their ships were to be free from molestation, and they were able to do a remunerative trade at the pirate ports in munitions of war. However, the treaty had not been actually ratified, and they expressed

*S.P. Holland*, Jan. 25, 1619.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Gardiner found that the bundle of papers relating to this affair is missing from the Simancas archives. I take the terms from Duro, *op. cit.* iii. 360.

in general terms a desire to further James's scheme.<sup>1</sup> The King of Spain was naturally suspicious, but the negotiations continued fitfully and with some ill humour. James at any rate had his heart in the project. If he had no higher motive he was certainly anxious to enjoy posing as the leader of Christendom, and in any case the weapon was too nicely adjusted to meet the equivocal attitude of Spain to be abandoned.

Thus the first duty that fell upon Buckingham and the new Commissioners on formally taking up their duties was to mobilise six vessels of the royal navy, to which were to be added five from the Cinque Ports and fourteen from the merchants, making in all a fleet of twenty-five sail. At the same time the Dutch were definitely invited to co-operate with a similar force, with the idea that the two squadrons should enter the Mediterranean together, and offer their assistance to the Spanish admiral in his operation against Algiers—a course which put them in a position to see that his Armada was not used against Venice or for any other undesirable object.<sup>2</sup> The Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was to provide a contingent for the Spanish fleet, was immediately informed by Salvetti, his agent in London, of what was going on in the English dockyards. The King, he wrote, had ordered a fleet to be equipped as soon as possible, so as to sail at any moment. It was to join with twenty-four Dutchmen and enter the Mediterranean on pretence of operating against the pirates, but really to keep an eye on Spain. Everything indeed assures us that this was the main object of the armament. In a minute which Coke wrote at this time, recommending greater secrecy in Admiralty business, the trend of official

<sup>1</sup> *Carleton Letters*, 136, 143, June 4; 324, July 7, 1617, and cf. *ib.* p. 491.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, iii. 289.

opinion is quite clear. 'In this preparation against pirates,' he says, 'it may be conceived the State hath some further design, and if it be governed by general warrants it will go slowly on. The gazetteers of Venice will take notice of it, as they have done of our former propositions. But if it be thought fit to carry it by the trust of a few and by degrees, by this unexpected preparation his Majesty's sea forces shall be redeemed from contempt; his present treaties with our neighbours shall have more reputation; foreign princes will with more respect proceed in their attempts; and if they find any interruptions in their principal designs they shall not have the advantage of our security and nakedness to redeem their honours by falling on us.'

As we have seen, the preparation was already not an entire secret, and unfortunately it was no more sudden than secret. Cranfield's reform had not had time to show effect, and mainly for want of money the mobilisation proceeded very heavily. Contributions had been demanded from the seaports, but they came in slowly. The fact was, the English merchants, like the Dutch, had come to some kind of arrangement with the pirates, and so deep was their mistrust of the navy that they feared an attack on Algiers would only end in failure and exasperate the pirates without reducing their power. Moreover, the general opinion was that the Spanish armament was really intended to take advantage of the condition to which our national defences had been reduced by the shortcomings of the late administration, and from all the ports local governors were crying for means to prepare the coast defences against an invasion, while all over the country the county forces were being specially mustered to prepare them for mobilisation.

So great indeed was the financial difficulty that it pro-

duced a most remarkable proposition to the Lord Admiral. It came from Sir Henry Mainwaring, who had recently returned from Venice, disgusted probably, like most other people, with land service under the Republic, and sighing for the excitement of his old life at sea. The Venetian Ambassador, it appears, had been instructed by his Government, who must have either mistrusted or been unaware of James's secret intention, to apply to him for the loan of some of the royal ships, and the Ambassador had asked Mainwaring to feel the ground for him. Upon this he applied to Buckingham. 'The Venetians' request to his Majesty,' he wrote, 'is only for the loan of some of his Majesty's ships, and they to bear the charge of waging and victualling the men, giving security to restore and repair them.' The Venetians had taken the most serious alarm at the fleet that was gathering in the Spanish ports; and Mainwaring, whom the Venetians wished to command the proposed contingent, saw his way to turning it to advantage. 'His Majesty,' he continued, 'may pretend to lay down any suspicion of this [that is, the Spanish] fleet in regard to himself, and therefore that he will desist from fitting his own ships. But if the Venetians will be at the charge, they may have orders to go forth—with this commission, that if the Spanish fleet bear in with the Straits they may follow them, and so stand for the Gulf [of Venice], whither they will arrive first, because the Spanish fleet must stop at Messina. If the Spanish fleet go not to the southward, then the Venetians have no need of a supply, and the ships are ready to proceed on his Majesty's own designs. But if the Spanish fleet should dissolve, the ships being forth might be employed against the Turkish pirates.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *S.P. Dom.* 1619, cv. 148.

From this it is clear and worthy of note that what the Venetians feared was not the galleys but the galleons that were being fitted out in the Atlantic ports. Mainwaring's suggestion for meeting the whole situation was as ingenious as his strategy was sound. It was practically the line the Dutch meant to take as preferable to that approved by James. Indeed, their answer to the English proposal was so unsatisfactory as to amount to a virtual refusal. They objected with some force that they had already twenty-five sail at sea, of which twenty-one were employed against the pirates. As for attacking Algiers, that would mean an act of war against 'the Sultan of Constantinople,' with whom they were at peace, while as for protecting Venice, that would amount to a breach of their truce with Spain; and, further, as they naïvely explained, they were allowing the Venetians to fit out four large men-of-war in Holland, although they had not asked so much, and had agreed that they should keep the eleven already in their service besides eight merchantmen that were also in their pay. Such an answer of course entirely upset James's great design, and notwithstanding the temptation of the scheme which Mainwaring had to offer in its place, it could not be thought of. Buckingham's dignity, if not the King's, could not submit to the hiring out of navy ships to a foreign power; nor could the Commissioners consent to a project which would at the outset seriously disturb the programme they had taken office to carry through.

To confirm the impossibility of proceeding with the King's original scheme, no satisfactory answer had yet been received from Spain with regard to the proposed joint operations, and, even if it came, such was the feeling at the time, both in Court and the country, that it became clearer every day that it was out of the ques-

tion to expect Englishmen to act harmoniously with Spaniards. Fortunately, the deadlock mattered little. The King's astute design appears already to have done its work, and just about the time that the final answer of the Dutch was received, news arrived from Cottington, the British envoy in Madrid, that the Spanish preparations were at an end. The tidings have a special interest of their own. The formation of a galley fleet was certainly not suspended, and here, therefore, we have another proof of how obsolete galleys had become in the eyes of the Northern powers. They were clearly regarded as a negligible quantity. The whole apprehension had been for the sailing vessels which had been getting ready in the oceanic ports. Still the English preparations were not immediately relaxed. It was given out that Lord Southampton, the arch-enemy of Spain, was to be offered the command of the proposed fleet. It was not till April that the work on the ships was finally suspended, the collection stopped, and the money returned to the merchants on the understanding it was to be ready at short notice, in case the mobilisation had to be revived.

The news that Cottington had sent was true. The Spanish Government, whatever their original intentions may have been, were now devoting their whole energy to removing the great flaw in their position by crushing the pirates. A fleet of sixty galleys assembled at Messina under the incompetent Prince Philibert of Savoy, on whose employment Philip relied for checking the designs of his turbulent father.<sup>1</sup> The objective was Navarino, the most westerly naval station of the Turks; but, according to Italian historians, the Duke of Osuna, in his jealousy of doing anything that would strengthen the

<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy was the son of Charles Emmanuel, the reigning Duke, by the Infanta Catherine, sister of Philip III. of Spain.

position of the Venetians, succeeded in diverting the expedition into attempting a surprise of the port of Susa below Tunis. The attack failed ignominiously, and Philibert was driven off with severe loss. Nor did the galleons effect much more in the ocean. The annual convoys were safely brought in, but only two pirate vessels were taken, and so ended the campaign, leaving the corsairs as powerful as before, and even more confident. James's stalking-horse was as good as ever, and there was every sign of its shelter being shortly required.

The Emperor Mathias was dead, and Ferdinand of Styria claimed to succeed him as King of Bohemia, in virtue of his previous election. In August he was also elected Emperor, and the revolutionary Government in Bohemia, seeing the mistake they had made in choosing a Catholic King, determined not to receive him. By a solemn vote of the Estates he was deposed, and Frederick, the Prince Palatine, elected in his place. For a while James's feather-headed son-in-law hesitated. Almost every one advised him to refuse so thorny and dangerous a seat; but his fair and high-spirited English wife urged him to accept, being sure of her father's support; and finally he took the rash step that was his downfall. For long the elements that went to make up the Thirty Years' War had been smouldering hotter and hotter. This last touch set all in a glow, and at any moment men looked to see the flames burst out in uncontrollable fury. For all her long intriguing Spain was unready for the moment. Her one idea still was to keep the English sea power neutral. The mediation into which to this end she had tempted James had failed, and there was nothing left but to let herself be drawn into the net which he had so cleverly spread in her path. She could resist the pressure no longer, and a few days before the Prince Palatine's elec-

tion preliminaries had been signed which accepted in principle the idea of joint action with England against the pirates. Instead of neutralising the dreaded force, she had opened the gate to admit it into the last place where she would like to have seen it. That arch-intriguer and opportunist, the Duke of Savoy, with his eyes always on Genoa and Milan, was encouraging the Prince Palatine in his wildest dreams, and just when the two places were most vital to Spain for her communications with the Emperor, she saw them once more threatened with a storm out of the North Sea.

At the close of the year news reached England that Frederick had actually been crowned King of Bohemia. The people were wild with delight, and James, torn between anxiety and indignation, allowed the collections for a fleet against the Barbary pirates, which had been stopped in April, to be re-opened. At the end of October he had received from Holland the long-deferred answer to his original proposals for a league against the corsairs. With many excuses for the delay, the States informed him they had decided not to ratify the treaty which their consul had made at Algiers. They had now ready for sea a squadron of fourteen sail under Moy Lambert, of Rotterdam, that was about to cruise against the common enemy, and they intended to relieve him in the spring with an equal force. So long as their resources lasted, they meant to continue the efforts against the Moslem pest, but without his Majesty's powerful hand they saw small appearance of utterly suppressing it. 'Wherefore they humbly besought him to show himself therein, as well by good effects in arming against the pirates as he had done by his advice and counsel to their own State.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Carleton Letters*, p. 397, October 22, 1619.

Of this appeal little notice appears to have been taken. Although the maintenance of a permanent Mediterranean squadron which the Dutch proposed was exactly what all the English experts advised, James was too much incensed with the cold reception with which the Dutch had greeted the proposal, when he himself was hot about it, to treat them with much respect. Now, however, that the war fever about him was growing so high, he appears to have thought it best, as they said, 'to show himself therein,' and he began in royal style. In January 1620 it was announced that Sir Robert Mansell, Vice-Admiral of the Kingdom and Lieutenant of the Royal Navy, was to command the fleet, and for his second he was to have the famous Sir Richard Hawkins, Vice-Admiral of Devon, the personification of all the finest traditions of the Elizabethan service. For moral effect no better choice could have been made. The official rank of Mansell would give the necessary dignity, while for Spanish seamen there lay in the name Hawkins terrors which made it second only to that of Drake.

As for the fleet itself, it was serious enough to justify the anxiety that was felt in Spain. It was to consist of six of the best ships in the royal navy, ten powerful merchantmen, and two pinnaces, or eighteen sail in all.<sup>1</sup> It was months, however, before the Navy Commissioners were allowed to get to work. The winter passed away and they were still without definite orders to proceed. For James, as for Elizabeth, it was one thing to decide on mobilising a fleet, and another to let it sail. Through the early part of 1620 he continued to sit in a fever of irresolution as to what attitude he should take to his son-in-law's position. As the opposing parties and opposing anxieties pushed

<sup>1</sup> See *post*, p. 114.

him this way and that, he was worried beyond bearing and strove pitifully to put off a decision like a Penelope by sitting down to an exhaustive study of Bohemian constitutional law from the earliest times. By the end of January Philip, who feared war as much as James himself, had finally given in to the Duke of Bavaria's proposals for the partition of the Palatinate. This was followed in February by the arrival in London of Ambassadors from the German Protestant Union to claim James's assistance in defending the threatened State. At first he was furious at being called upon to help the reckless son-in-law who had refused to listen to his advice, but gradually he began to give way. There was also in London a certain Scottish soldier of fortune, a Colonel Gray, who had come from Bohemia in search of troops, and had brought with him not only letters from Frederick and the King's daughter, but also one written in pleading terms by his little grandson.<sup>1</sup> It seems greatly to have affected the old King, and Gray soon obtained permission to raise two regiments—one in England and one in Scotland.

The war party was triumphant. At last it seemed they had the upper hand, when in the midst of their rejoicing Gondomar once more landed at Dover. Having been dragged into the struggle himself Philip was more than ever resolved that James and his navy must be kept out of it, and Gondomar's influence was his last hope. Every one knew what he had come for. He was met by Sir Henry Mainwaring, who not long after his return from Venice had been made Lieutenant of Dover Castle, probably to keep him quiet, and there he was sitting like a watchdog at the gate of the kingdom, allowing nothing to escape his keen eye. The Ambassador's

<sup>1</sup> Salvetti, Feb. 24.  
Mar. 6.

reception was of the coldest. There was no salute and no banquet, but Mainwaring went down to the beach to receive him, 'for which courtesy,' as the reformed pirate wrote, 'he said in jest he would excuse me twelve crowns out of the million I owed to Spaniards if I would pay the rest.' A courtly jest enough, but one that showed the fangs, and so the two dogs growled and bristled, and Gondomar passed on. Colonel Gray's drums were beating merrily for the new regiments when he reached London, re-echoing those in the Spanish Netherlands, where Spinola was mobilising the Archduke's forces for what every one felt was an invasion of the Palatinate. Gray even halted insolently under the Ambassador's very window, and, amid the jeers of a sympathetic crowd, cried for all true men who would serve the King's son-in-law to come to the place appointed. In the night his broadside was even fixed to the Embassy door. But all was of small avail. In a week the King was again in the hollow of Gondomar's hand, and the prospect of the fleet sailing for the Mediterranean seemed as far off as ever.

If James wished to be a peacemaker he was letting his great opportunity slip. As the long truce between Spain and the Dutch was drawing to an end, Philip was no less disturbed than James at the prospect of war. He was wholly unprepared, and during the previous summer had had the most serious cause for anxiety about his position in the Mediterranean. The Duke of Osuna was still in power at Naples, and he was known to be chafing dangerously at the way the Government had treated his brilliant efforts to restore Spanish prestige upon the sea. The enforced failure of his grand scheme had been followed by orders to send troops by way of Trieste to reinforce the Emperor for his operations against Bohemia, and to get them there quietly he had been told that the

permission of the Venetians was to be asked. He was also ordered to replace the troops in the Milanese, which were going by land to the Netherlands under the Duke of Savoy's sanction, with the best of his own, and, worst of all, there was fresh talk of breaking up his fleet. His term of office was coming to an end, but there was grave anxiety whether he would lay it down quietly. In July a report had reached London that he had actually revolted and set up an independent kingdom at Naples in alliance with France and Venice. For some weeks this news, which, if true, would have entirely changed the balance of power in the Mediterranean, was the talk of the town.<sup>1</sup> Nothing, however, came of the alarm, but it was quickly followed by the discovery of a league between Venice and Holland which was almost as bad. Every week the atmosphere grew more warlike, and James, beside himself with irresolution, was blubbing to Gondomar over his hard fate to be king in such a world. Philip, as anxious as himself, was writing in the most serious terms to the Archduke in Brussels to warn him against the danger he was running in meddling with the Bohemian quarrel. If his general, Spinola, were permitted to attack the Palatinate, it would mean certain war with England, and that, as Philip urged, had always been considered the most impolitic thing a Spanish king could take in hand.

Still of this James knew nothing. At Deptford and Chatham little or nothing was being done to prepare the fleet till suddenly in the first week in April, just a month after Gondomar's landing, the Navy Commissioners received orders to push on the work with all speed.<sup>2</sup> The reason of the sudden change is not quite clear. Salvetti believed that it was because Osuna, whose fleet, to prevent

<sup>1</sup> Salvetti, July 4-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Coke MSS.*, p. 107.

a recurrence of the late alarm, had been broken up, had been ordered to send some of his galleons to Cadiz.<sup>1</sup> It is also worthy of note that, a few days later, Mainwaring at Dover sent up word that transports carrying some two thousand Spanish troops had touched there, bound for the Archduke's port of Dunkirk. But, whatever the cause, from that time the dockyards were in full swing. The King might be a baby in Gondomar's hands, but it was another task to control the powerful war party at Court. Already Gondomar had had a rebuff to warn him. Captain Roger North, one of Raleigh's old companions, had fitted out a small expedition for South America in which several influential persons were interested. The Amazons was said to be its destination, and the Ambassador had demanded its arrest. North had already left the Thames; but about the same time that the Navy Commissioners received their instructions to proceed with the fleet, Gondomar received an order under the Great Seal that North was to be stayed at Plymouth. A month later, news came that North had sailed before the order reached him. Gondomar was naturally incensed. To appease him a proclamation against the offender was issued and a royal pinnace sent in pursuit of him. Of course it never found him. It was like the old times of Hawkins and Drake over again, when such escapades were of yearly occurrence, and the prospects of the war party grew brighter than ever.

When in April Salvetti announced to his Government that the fleet was to be mobilised, he had said he was sure it could not be ready for sea under two or three months. It really took longer, partly for lack of money,

<sup>1</sup> *News Letter*, April 21 to May 1. Three of Osuna's galleons left Naples on April 8-18 and reached Gibraltar May 20-30. *Documentos Inéditos*, xlvii. 418-19.

and partly perhaps because it was not intended that it should sail before August. The fact was that Gondomar, to whom the unwelcome negotiations for the combined operations against the corsairs had been confided, was doing everything in his power to render them abortive. The principle of the arrangement was that each country was to provide a fleet of twenty sail which were to keep the seas from May till October for three years, and Gondomar was stipulating for a system of co-operation which he must have known would never be accepted by the English seamen. The fleets were to act in two separate squadrons, one within and one without the Straits; and as James insisted on his own fleet taking the Mediterranean station, Gondomar was proposing, with the obvious intention of keeping a watch on it and neutralising its initiative, that six vessels from the Spanish squadron should be attached to it, and that their place should be filled by six British ships being placed under the Spanish admiral for service with him outside the Straits. He further desired, with an equally obvious intention of gaining time, that the British fleet, instead of going straight to its allotted station, should begin operations with a cruise on the north coast of Spain.<sup>1</sup>

To all appearance Spain was perfectly ready to abide by her promise. Osuna's galleons had come round to Cadiz, and a fleet was out ostensibly awaiting the arrival of the English squadron. But it was understood in Spain that Mansell would not move till every detail was settled; and secure in Gondomar's skill the Spanish Government was easy that nothing could be done for that season at least. Towards the end of May, however, they were sur-

<sup>1</sup> *Aston MSS.* vol. ii. (B.M. Add. 36445) fol. 11. *Copy of Articles for joint action* &c. These articles recite the original negotiations of Digby in 1617.

prised by a sudden announcement from Sir Walter Aston, James's new Ambassador at Madrid, that Sir Robert Mansell would sail about the end of July, and that in the meanwhile he had instructions to settle with them the small points of detail which were still outstanding. The King his master hoped, in spite of the differences that had arisen, co-operation could be arranged, but in any case he meant to carry the pirate business through. The ministers were aghast. They protested it was never intended that the English fleet should move till everything had been settled. They even accused the Ambassador of having sent for the ships, and on the plea that the matter was in Gondomar's hands they flatly refused to negotiate.

All was in vain. Their sullen resistance only brought them a still severer shock. About a month later, after having reported their attitude home, Aston received instructions to inform the Spanish Government that James had made up his mind to undertake the pirates single-handed. Their position was completely turned, and ten days afterwards Buckingham notified to Gondomar officially that Mansell would sail between August 5 and 10, and go straight to the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> The following day, July 20, Mansell's commission as Admiral and Captain-General was signed, and though the dockyards were already working at high pressure, the King sent down to urge still greater efforts, since he particularly wanted the fleet to be at Plymouth by August 10.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Aston MSS.* vol. i. (*Add.* 36444) Digby to Aston, May 19. Aston to Digby in reply, fol. 156, and Aston's *Letter Book*, *ibid.* vol. vi. July 9. Buckingham to Gondomar (copy), *ibid.* vol. i. July 19.

<sup>2</sup> Salvetti (*News Letter*, July 20-30 and July 27 to Aug. 6-7) says the rendezvous of the fleet was 'a distant port about eighty miles from here,' i.e. London. His distances are so vague that this is no guide. He calls Windsor a town sixteen or eighteen miles from London. Plymouth was always the final rendezvous of south-going fleets. In a later letter of Aug. 2-12 he calls the port 'Beroclia in the province of Hamptonia.'

The only explanation of this date to be found is that two Dutch squadrons were on the point of sailing for their usual station off the Straits. There was no actual arrangement for joint operations, nor much prospect of the seamen of the two nations acting cordially together, owing to the outrageous way in which, in spite of the late treaties, the Dutch continued to behave to English ships in the Far East. Yet experts agreed that the best way to deal with the corsairs was to have two squadrons cruising outside the Straits and two within, and further that August or September was the best time for them to reach the station so as to allow the pirate fleet to leave the Mediterranean for its usual cruise for the Spanish autumn convoys and to prevent its ever getting back.<sup>1</sup> It may, however, be also noticed that at the same time Digby received orders to hold himself in readiness to receive his final instructions as Ambassador Extraordinary to Spain, and at such a moment even the apparent co-operation of the two powers in Spanish waters would not be without its value.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, it was not till September 7 that the fleet got clear of the Thames and came to anchor in the Downs—behind time it is true, but not more so than was usual even in the best days of Elizabeth. The Dutch were as much behindhand as the English. On August 8 Carleton at the Hague had sent over word that a deputation of the States had waited on him to say that they were going to send a fleet of twenty sail against the Algerines under Haultain, Admiral of Zeeland, which was to sail early in October. As the King was doing the same, they hoped the two fleets might act as one, and if he consented they were

<sup>1</sup> See Monson's advice to the Council, 1617, *Tracts*, p. 251. And cf. 'Advice of a Seaman (Math. Knott, gent.), touching the expedition intended against the Turkish Pirates, 1634,' *Harl. MSS.* 6893.

<sup>2</sup> Salvetti, July 20-30. Digby did not in fact leave England till the following year, and then not for Spain.

ready to instruct their officers accordingly. To this humble proposal the King returned an equally condescending answer. He reminded them of the coldness with which they had received a similar proposal when he was graciously pleased to make it, and of their outrageous behaviour to his subjects in the East Indies. Still, if they really were in earnest, in the cause of Christendom he was ready to forget and forgive. Only they had to some extent lost their chance. He was now sending his fleet into the Mediterranean under a definite agreement with the King of Spain. He was no longer free to make engagements with other states for assistance. Still, if the two fleets did happen to meet, he for his part would not refuse their help in so good a cause.<sup>1</sup>

The two fleets did happen to meet, and that very quickly. In the Downs Mansell found a squadron of sixteen Zeeland ships under Haultain. Twenty more from Holland were daily expected, but they intended to sail independently because, although they were commanded by a vice-admiral only, they would not sail under a Zeeland admiral, nor would the Zeeland admiral give up the prerogative of his superior rank. The wind was foul and Mansell seized the opportunity to come up to London with all his captains to bid the King farewell and also to seek final instructions as to how he was to act. This was probably the main reason. Mansell's commission contemplated, as the central operation, a demand of satisfaction, supported by a demonstration before Algiers, and to be followed in certain eventualities by an attempt to destroy their ships within the mole. The Dutch, on the other hand, like all the English experts, condemned the attempt, and were unanimously in favour of achieving

<sup>1</sup> Carleton Letters, pp. 485, 491.

their end by systematic cruising in the open sea. Thus the two admirals must have found themselves from the outset faced with a difficulty which, unless removed, would render concerted action almost impossible. There was, moreover, the further uncertainty that Gondomar was still holding back, and no definite agreement had been come to with Spain. The King was at Windsor, and it was a week or more before Mansell and his troop of captains regained the fleet. They brought with them full and detailed instructions for the conduct of the expedition, but in the interval they had missed a wind, and the Dutch had apparently passed on.<sup>1</sup>

Then followed weeks of waiting. No news came up from Plymouth that the fleet had finally sailed. It was a critical delay. The splendid equipment of the ships, wherein, as Salvetti wrote, not even music for dancing was omitted, and the glittering appearance of Mansell and his cavalcade of captains had set every one whispering that something more than pirates was in the wind. Some believed the Court was waiting for news from Germany which might change the fleet's destination. Others scented the influence of the Spanish Ambassador. Neither opinion was perhaps groundless. A different destination for the two fleets had actually been suggested from Holland—not officially, but privately by a member of the Government—probably with the intention of feeling the ground. The King, 'according to his wonted sincerity,' chose to appear highly displeased at the proposal, and Carleton had orders to express 'his Majesty's dislike and detestation thereof.' What the obnoxious design was we do not know, but the Spanish Governor of Milan

<sup>1</sup> Salvetti, *Letters of September. The Journal of the Algiers Voyage, S.P. Dom. ccxxii. 70.* Mansell's instructions are dated Sept. 10. See *post* pp. 115-6.

was already stirring about the head of Lake Como with the obvious intention of securing, by the seizure of the Valtelline, an all-Spanish line of communication with Vienna by way of the Tyrol, and the way by which his move could best be parried was a blow at Genoa, the key of the whole route.

As for the part Gondomar was playing, he had succeeded in confirming the King in his faint-hearted ideas. He had persuaded him that his duty to his daughter and his son-in-law extended only to preserving the Palatinate, and not to supporting their usurpation of Bohemia; and further that Spinola's army, which was already in motion, was only intended to support the Emperor's just claims to the disputed kingdom. James indeed was getting more dangerously irresolute than ever. Then, in spite of Gondomar's shameless assurances, came the news that Spinola had actually entered the Palatinate. James was naturally beside himself at the way he had been gulled, and the guilty Ambassador was at his wit's end. From Madrid he had been receiving more urgent orders than ever that Mansell's fleet must on no account be allowed to sail, and here was his royal dupe quite out of hand. The infuriated old King was openly declaring he was going to send an army to his son-in-law's rescue, and the Court was exulting at the prospect of war in the spring.

Gondomar's last hope lay in Digby. Among all the diverse hands that were stirring the seething caldron there was none so masterly as his. No man had kept his head so level or seen his way so clearly how to preserve the peace of Europe with honour and distinction. If any hope in that wave of war fever were to be found, it was in him, and to him Gondomar played his last card. In pursuance of the King of Spain's agreement for joint action against the pirates, it had been settled that Man-

sell's fleet was to be allowed the free use of Spanish ports. Gondomar now explained that, in view of the King's hostile attitude, this could not be permitted. An English fleet could no longer be regarded as friendly. It was a clever move, but Digby was equal to it. He pointed out that in the excited state of public opinion the King could not possibly have said less than he had. If Gondomar chose to regard the royal declaration otherwise than as a friendly effort to amuse his anti-Spanish councillors and to preserve peace, it could not be helped, and if he had authority to break with England he had better say so at once. For whatever the King of Spain thought of the fleet, it would certainly sail. It was impossible for the baffled Ambassador to say another word. With Digby in this frame of mind he knew it was useless to protest further. On October 3 Sir Richard Hawkins received his commission as vice-admiral, and a week later, just when the Spaniards were comfortably assuring themselves the danger was over for the season, and had recalled their fleet into Cadiz for the winter, with no prospect of being able to get to sea again before the spring, Mansell cleared the Lizard.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aston to Digby, Oct. 13. For the other authorities on these negotiations. see Gardiner, *History of England*, iii. 374-5, note. Add. MSS. 36444.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MANSSELL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

'IN James's unhappy reign,' the highest authority on the period has written, 'the true policy of England is to be found, not in the manifestoes of its sovereign or in the despatches of its ministers, but in the memorials in which Spanish statesmen expressed their apprehension.' As we watch Europe drifting like an ill-steered ship into the whirlpool of the Thirty Years' War, our attention is again and again arrested at points where it seems that a little vigorous and intelligent action on the part of England might have arrested its fatal course. At no point is this consideration so striking as when Mansell put to sea, bound for the Mediterranean. It was the eleventh hour, it is true. Long before the fleet reached its destination the battle of Prague had been fought and the Prince Palatine was a fugitive from his new Bohemian dominions. Still there was time. Winter was at hand to stop further military action; it lay in Spain's power to say that the quarrel must go no further, and Spain, helpless and unprepared, was staring at what it would mean for her upon the sea if she withheld the word to halt.

It is not by its fighting power that the importance of Mansell's little fleet must be measured. For Spain, and indeed for the Empire, it meant something more than the number of its crews and the power of its guns. For Spain it raised the spectre with which she had been haunted ever since Drake had first appeared upon her

coasts—the spectre of an alliance between the infidel corsairs and the heretic powers of the North. It was a coalition she knew she dared not face; it was a fear that was not entirely without foundation. It may even be that the suggestion, which on the eve of Mansell's departure reached James from some exalted personage in Holland and which he so deeply 'disliked and detested,' was something of this nature—something which would at least have rendered the allied fleets independent of Spanish ports. Every one knew of the as yet unratified convention which the Dutch had negotiated with the Barbary states, and Englishmen who were scarcely less well treated by them might easily do the same. Nor must it be forgotten that, when Drake and Norreys were aiming at an occupation of Portugal, and again when Essex had possession of Cadiz, some steps had certainly been taken for using Morocco as a base of supply, and the Christians' overtures had been well received. It was these memories perhaps that forced Philip into agreeing to allow his ports to be used by Mansell's fleet. It would be like a thorn in his side; but better so than to see it acting from Africa. As he well knew, his banished Moriscos were ready to welcome with open arms any one that would help them to their revenge on Spain, and the older race of corsairs were scarcely less ready to avert the anger of the men who had taught them their art and were all they feared upon the sea. This was what the little fleet meant for Spain at a moment when the battle of Prague had raised the war fever in England to boiling point, and when the twelve years' truce with the Dutch had not six months to live.

Nor does this aspect of the expedition represent for us all its importance. Were it only for the poor results it achieved, its fortunes would scarcely be worth following. The dawn of England's career as a Mediterranean power

was as unpromising as her first attempts at colonisation. There was no trace discernible of how it was destined to press upon the world and force history into the channels in which it flows to-day. Yet Mansell's fleet was the beginning, and we must see in it the pale dawn of all that it heralded. England was about to step into the primeval arena upon which the greatest dramas of dominion had found their catastrophe. It was here upon the sea which the three continents embraced that empire had broken empire since the ages began in unending strife, and for the first time the British navy was entering its bloodstained waters. For Englishmen at least it proved to be one of the most momentous departures in history, redeeming a contemptible reign from much of its insignificance; and as we see the little squadron thus trailing, as it were, a fiery wake behind it across the Bay, it glows with an attraction too real and too romantic for us not to linger a while over its fortunes.

The men to whom fell the unrealised distinction of inaugurating the new era were probably the best at the King's disposal. With the two chief flag-officers the only fault to be found was that neither of them had been employed at sea for many years, Mansell not since 1604, when he began his disastrous career as Treasurer of the Navy, and Hawkins not since 1594, when he was taken prisoner during his raid into the South Sea after fighting for three days an overwhelmingly superior force. Since then a quarter of a century had passed. In the interval he had suffered in breach of the laws of war a long and harsh imprisonment in Spain which had severely impaired his health, and he was now nearly sixty years of age. His appointment was no doubt partly due to the influence of the merchants, a committee of whom, in accordance with the precedent of Elizabeth's last years, was acting jointly

with the Navy Commissioners in superintending the expedition. He appears to have been highly esteemed in the City, and in these cases the London merchants usually expected to have the naming of the vice or rear admiral in order to insure that their own ships at least should not be entirely at the mercy of courtier officers.<sup>1</sup> Possibly, too, he had the powerful support of the Prince of Wales. Hawkins had just completed his 'Observations' on his voyage into the South Sea, the most valuable work that had yet been written on the naval art, and at his death in 1622 a dedication to Prince Charles was found among his papers.<sup>2</sup>

The rear-admiral was Sir Thomas Button, who had first brought himself into notice when in 1600 the Spaniards occupied Kinsale. He then succeeded in boldly holding the harbour with a single pinnace till reinforcements arrived, and since then he had been almost continually employed against pirates in the Narrow Seas. About 1612 he had been sent under the auspices of Prince Henry on an expedition to explore the North-west passage, and had been so far successful as to establish the fact that there was no western outlet from Hudson's Bay. Latterly he had been serving as admiral on the Irish station, and had thrown up his appointment at Mansell's request, expecting to be made his vice-admiral—a claim which after some demur he had handsomely surrendered in Hawkins's favour. Among the ship commanders, though several, like Sir Arthur Mainwaring, appear to have been gentlemen of more spirit and influence than knowledge or experience of their duties, there was a leaven of the best type of Raleigh's men, like Samuel

<sup>1</sup> See *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, ii. 13, 69, note. *The Hawkins Voyages* (Hakluyt Society, 1878), Introd. p. xxxviii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 87.

Argall, just home from Virginia, and others like Sir John Fearn and Christopher Harris, who had recently served a valuable apprenticeship as pirate captains themselves.<sup>1</sup>

For his conduct of the expedition Mansell's critics have always treated him with merciless contempt. Their cue is taken from Monson, who, with his usual haste and lack of information, acrimoniously condemned the campaign from beginning to end. It may be doubted, however, whether the blame lay with the admirals. When they returned home they excused their failure on the ground 'that the want of authority and their limited commission was the cause of their ill success.' This, as Monson allows, 'was afterwards admitted by all men';

<sup>1</sup> The full list of the fleet as given in the *Journal of the Algiers Voyage*, S.P. Dom. cccxii. 106, is as under:—

	Guns	Tons	Men	Commanders
ROYAL NAVY:				
'Lion' . . . . .	40	600	250	Sir R. Mansell.
'Vanguard' . . . . .	40	660	250	Sir R. Hawkins.
'Rainbow' . . . . .	40	660	250	Sir T. Button.
'Constant Reformation' .	40	660	250	[Sir] Arth. Mainwaring.
'Antelope' . . . . .	34	400	160	Sir Hy. Palmer.
'Convertine' . . . . .	36	500	220	Thos. Love.
MERCHANTMEN:				
'Golden Phoenix' . . . .	24	300	—	Sam. Argall.
'Samuel' . . . . .	21	300	—	Chris. Harris.
'Marygold' . . . . .	21	260	—	Sir J. Fearn.
'Zouch Phoenix' . . . .	26	280	—	John Penington.
'Barbary' . . . . .	18	200	—	Thos. Porter.
'Centurion' . . . . .	22	200	—	Sir Fr. Tanfield.
'Primrose' . . . . .	18	180	—	Sir John Hampden.
'Hercules' . . . . .	24	300	—	Eusabey Cave.
'Neptune' . . . . .	21	280	—	Robt. Haughton.
'Merchant Bonaventura' .	23	260	—	John Chidley or Chudleigh.
'Restore' (pinnace) . . .	12	130	50	George Raymond.
'Marmaduke' (pinnace) .	12	100	50	Thos. Hughes.

All the merchantmen had iron guns, the R.N. brass. The 'Convertine' was Raleigh's 'Destiny,' confiscated.

but he himself, in his ignorance of the dual object of the expedition, treated the plea as absurd. Fortunately, after nearly three centuries of oblivion, a copy of Mansell's instructions has come to light to secure him a fair hearing, and to emphasise the injustice of condemning an admiral's strategy without a full knowledge of the political considerations that deflected it.<sup>1</sup>

Though in form they of course disclose nothing but an intended campaign against the Barbary corsairs, they are framed in such a way as to secure a diversion of the expedition on the shortest possible notice. The admiral is informed that his object is to extirpate pirates, especially in the Mediterranean, whither he is to go direct, taking care to keep as close inshore down the coast of the Peninsula as possible on the look-out for any communication the Ambassador at Madrid may send him. Though no definite arrangement had been come to, he is to hold good correspondence with the Spanish and Dutch fleets, but on no account is he to intervene in their quarrels. In complete disregard of Gondomar's proposals, he was given Gibraltar for his rendezvous, whither he was to proceed as quickly as possible and inquire for orders from Aston. The plan of action enjoined also ignored the suggestions for the fusion of the two fleets, for he was told to leave the Atlantic station entirely to the Spaniards, and take the whole of his force into the Straits. Then we have the important caution that on no account was he to attempt any hostile act against the town or castles of Algiers 'for fear of its strength and the Grand Signior's amity.' He was to proceed by diplomacy, presenting a letter from the King and demanding the surrender of captured ships, the resti-

<sup>1</sup> *Aston Papers*, vol. ii. f. 15 (*Add. MSS.* 36445). The instructions were signed on Sept. 10, 1620, during Mansell's farewell visit to Windsor.

tution of prize goods, and the release of captives. If he obtained this he might endeavour by force or stratagem to burn the pirate fleet within the mole, but only with great caution, so as not to hazard his Majesty's ships. In cruising he was further cautioned that he was not to go east of Cape Spartivento, at the southern end of Sardinia, unless the weather or a chase compelled him. It will be seen that this prohibition insured as far as possible that his operations should not draw him out of that part of the Mediterranean which lay between Spain and her North Italian possessions, so that his fleet might remain a constant menace if any attempt were contemplated to send assistance to the Emperor by sea. It is equally significant that he was not to risk the fighting efficiency of his fleet by hazardous attacks on pirate ports, and that he was, if possible, to obtain satisfaction without fighting at all. Negotiations would not only serve to keep up the pretence of stopping piracy, but would tend to securing an African base should war break out with Spain. Considering the state of affairs abroad and of public opinion in England when Mansell sailed, nothing was more likely, and we may well believe that the English Government at such a time had no intention of throwing away a fleet in rashly attacking the most ruthless enemy of Spain. With these considerations in mind we may follow the expedition with more sympathy than its commanders have usually received.

On October 29 the fleet made Cape St. Vincent, where Mansell sent ashore for the 'letters of advice' he had been told to expect. He was burning for news. From a ship that followed him he had learnt that, the very day after he sailed, letters in hot haste had come into Plymouth for him from the Court, and they were known to be of the

utmost importance, for the messenger rode with a halter round his neck.<sup>1</sup> But there were no letters awaiting him, and he passed at once to his rendezvous and anchored at Gibraltar. Here he found the Spanish vice-admiral with two galleons, and from him learnt that the pirates had been particularly active, having recently sacked a small Spanish port and threatened Gibraltar itself. But from Aston there was not a word. He resolved to carry on, and, in accordance with his instructions, arranged with the Spanish officer to cruise within the Straits between Gibraltar and Minorca, 'being' as he says, 'the limits of my charge,' while the Spaniards cruised outside.<sup>2</sup> This was agreed to, and further that Mansell should be allowed to land his sick men at Gibraltar and lodge them in quarters specially prepared for them.

These arrangements completed, Mansell passed on to Malaga, where he met with a most flattering reception from the authorities. Still it was the worst port in the south-east of Spain, and it says little for the good faith of the Spaniards, or their confidence in their allies, that it had been fixed as the headquarters of the English fleet while it was upon the coast. Here the Admiral hoped for his final orders without fail, but not a line had come for him nor a word of the Spanish contingent of oared craft which he had been led to expect. After waiting a day he decided to despatch an officer immediately to the Ambassador at Madrid, and without further loss of time to take a cast up the coast as far as Alicante in search of the pirates who had been so active, and in hopes of finding his instructions there.<sup>3</sup>

On November 7 he sailed with the three squadrons of

<sup>1</sup> Mansell to Aston, Nov. 5. *Aston Papers*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> Mansell to Calvert, March 15, 1621. *S.P., Spain*.

<sup>3</sup> Mansell to Aston, Nov. 5. *Aston Papers*, i.

his fleet disposed in echelon and his starboard and seaward squadron advanced, while the few light craft he had kept close inshore to probe the bays and inlets. Baffling winds were encountered, and it was not till the 19th that he made Alicante without having seen a single pirate sail. It was clear his presence must have frightened them from the coast. At Alicante there was still not a line to guide him, and he despatched yet another officer to Cartagena. Nothing is more eloquent of the uncertain object of the expedition than this incessant anxiety for orders. There was still no news of the Spanish contingent, and the Dutch fleet, he heard, having reached Gibraltar after he had left and learned his arrangement with the Spanish admiral, had passed on to Tunis and the Levant. He was thus at a loss what to do; but rather than be idle it was resolved, perhaps not too wisely, to sail at once for Algiers in order to present the King's demands, and in doing so to make a full reconnaissance of the whole position.

There they anchored on November 27 with 'white ensigns flying from the poops of the Admiral and Rear-Admiral,' but without showing other colours or firing any salute. In reply to a flag of truce they were informed that the Pasha had orders from Constantinople to treat with them and furnish supplies. With that negotiations began, and the King's letter was presented. It demanded the immediate surrender of all British prisoners, ships, and goods then in the port, and satisfaction for the hundred and fifty vessels the corsairs had taken or destroyed during the past six years. The answer was that no reply could be given till the Divan had been summoned, and that would take a week. Mansell decided to wait, and so far was he from intending any hostilities that, in view of the dangerous nature of the Road, he struck his

topmasts and yards, and made all snug to ride out the negotiations, which threatened to be not a little tedious. No sooner was he thus helpless than vessels began to pass in and out continuously. Having lost all his 'long-boats' in a gale, and being without regular pinnaces, he was powerless to interfere, and he soon ascertained that the Algerines were busy forcing all their best English prisoners aboard and sending them out to sea. Mansell protested, and the corsairs promised to desist, but with no intention of doing so.

Meanwhile six Spanish men-of-war appeared. They excused their intrusion into the English sphere of operations by alleging that they were in chase of some pirates who had recently taken a large ship off Cartagena; but Mansell was well aware this was not their real object. Six vessels, it will be remembered, was the contingent which Gondomar had demanded should be attached to the British squadron, and there can be no doubt that they had been sent to see what Mansell was doing. Finding him quietly anchored in the road and in constant communication with the shore, their worst suspicions were aroused. The haunting fear that England meant to ally herself with the corsairs hurried them to the conviction that they had caught Mansell in the act of hatching the dreaded plot. In hope apparently of provoking hostilities they opened fire on the batteries of Algiers, but finding this without effect they retired, and without further inquiry held away for Spain to report Mansell's treachery.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, without suspicion of what were the Spaniards' unhandsome intentions, Mansell loyally proceeded with his negotiation. The following day the answer

<sup>1</sup> Mansell to Aston, Jan. 13, 1621. *Aston Papers*, vol. ii.

to the King's demands was received. It promised to deliver up the prisoners and begged for the appointment of a consul to settle the other demands. On the morrow forty miserable wretches were sent off, and the admirals saw clearly they were being played with. They resolved, therefore, in order to secure the return of their hostages, and perhaps lull the Algerines into security, to send off a common man who was willing to play the part of Consul. They had ascertained that the English prizes, instead of being prepared for delivery, were being unrigged and unloaded, and that, in spite of the engagement, English prisoners had been continually forced to sea. Clearly more drastic measures would be needed, and after a vigorous protest to the Pasha they held away for Cagliari in Sardinia. Their object was probably merely to get wood and water, for on the wind coming easterly they put about for Minorca, and on December 14 anchored there in Alcudia Bay, fuming at the instructions which forced them to play so tame a part.

It was indeed a lame beginning, and it is impossible not to believe their angry protestation that they would never have been contented to be so baffled had their instructions permitted a rougher answer. They were men, we must remember, who had given plenty of hard blows before, who had come out in the pride and prestige of the new sea power, and surrounded by all the splendour and dignity of the King's service, to show Dutchmen and Spaniards once for all how the vermin of the sea were to be stamped out. They had been insulted and abused, so they said, as never were the bearers of a royal message before. They thirsted for revenge, and, had the least discretion been allowed them, they would certainly have done something to take it there and then. As it was, all they could do was to send home for

authority to act with vigour and leave to remain out for another period of six months.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile they had no intention of remaining idle. Since they entered the Mediterranean they had learned enough to know how to occupy themselves profitably in the interval. The idea was for the main fleet, as soon as it had revictualled and watered and picked up the supplies and pinnaces which had been promised from England, to return to cruise off Algiers. There it would lie in wait while the pinnaces and promised Spanish oared craft beat up the coast and drove the corsairs into its clutches. They had learned already it was only in the open sea and stormy weather—when they had a whole day to chase, 'and so much wind as to overbear them with sail'—that they could hope to catch the nimble pirates. On Christmas night, as they passed from Alcudia to Alicante, still hoping for orders, they had actually fallen into the middle of a corsair squadron. It was a squally night, and Button had caught one of them within musket shot. Several times he raked her through and through. The crash of her timbers and the screams of the wounded could be heard in the darkness again and again, yet she and all her consorts escaped. In those confined seas, as Mansell complained, the corsairs could sail the royal ships out of sight in four hours.

The plan proposed might possibly have overcome the difficulty, but it was not destined to be tried. At Alicante there was still no news, and while they lay there at a loss how to act they had to witness the Spaniards boisterously celebrating the battle of Prague and the dethronement

<sup>1</sup> Mansell to Buckingham, Alicante, January 13, 1621, *Harleian MSS.* 1581, f. 70. See also a memorandum concerning proposals for giving him a freer hand, especially 'for his night attempts and for his day battery,' and extending his cruising ground as far east as Cephalonia, in *S.P. Dom.* cxix. 144.

of their own Princess Royal. It was a poor substitute for the galleys they expected, and relations between the shore and the ships were far from pleasant. Their annoyance was further aggravated by finding the previously cordial demeanour of the Spaniards had changed to a barely disguised insolence. The ugly report of the Spanish admiral had done its work, and Mansell saw no chance of getting the assistance he required for chastising the arrogance of Algiers. He wrote a strong protest to Aston explaining the whole affair, and begging him to put things right. He assured the Ambassador that, 'contrary to ill-informed opinion of its strength,' Algiers might easily be destroyed by bombardment. He had written to the Lord Admiral to sanction the attempt. All he required was a contingent of galleys and smaller oared craft. 'If,' he said, 'the Spaniards will give us the means as by the capitulations agreed, we will give a greater blow in a day this next spring than all Christendom has done with all their endeavours since the pirates first began to make head.'<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, in spite of the ill-behaviour of the Spaniards, he resolved to do his best to protect their commerce; but, though detachments of the fleet were continually putting to sea on tidings of pirates being about, not a single vessel was seen, much less captured. It was not till the second week in January 1621 that the longed-for despatches arrived, just as Mansell was writing off again pleading more earnestly than ever for an enlargement of his powers, so as to cover his intended attack on Algiers harbour. They were dated from England on

<sup>1</sup> Mansell to Aston, Jan. 13, 1621, and another later undated, *Aston Papers*, vol. ii. Mansell seems to have thought that a 'capitulation' had been signed, but the paper he inclosed is only a copy of Gondomar's draft proposals with the English counter-proposals in the margin. Aston's report on the Spanish admiral's accusation, *ibid.* 136.

November 23, and informed him that he was to continue in the Mediterranean for another six months, and that his pinnaces and victuals were coming to Malaga. Hawkins and his squadron were immediately sent thither to receive them and cover that coast till they arrived, while Mansell and Button between them watched Cartagena and Alicante. Still no prizes were met with, and at the end of the month Mansell gave orders for the whole fleet to concentrate on Hawkins at Malaga. On the way thither he fell in with Haultain, the Zeeland Admiral, with seven sail in company. The truce between Spain and Holland was on the point of expiring, and nothing definite had yet been done to secure its prolongation. A renewal of the war was looked for in a few weeks, and Haultain said he had twenty-two vessels in all cruising within and without the Straits. Eager to deal the pirates a blow while the truce lasted, he proposed a joint attack upon Algiers, but this Mansell says he refused; and yet so suspicious were the Spaniards that he was immediately accused of conspiring some new perfidy with the Dutch.<sup>1</sup> Next day he and Button were driven back to Alicante and did not sail again for a week. In the interval Button, active as ever, got in another week's cruise, but still without result. When finally they made Malaga, it was only to be driven to leeward of it and to be compelled to bear up for Gibraltar, and there Hawkins joined in the middle of February with the long expected victuallers and two royal pinnaces. Still Mansell found it impossible to carry out the design as he wished. Without more pinnaces or the Spanish oared contingent, of which nothing had been heard, it would not work, and he resolved to stay cruising where he was, between Gibraltar and Ceuta, till he heard again from

<sup>1</sup> Mansell to Aston. *Aston Papers*, ii. 152.

England. For nearly a month he held the station with squadrons on either side of the Straits while he himself visited Tetuan and endeavoured to wring some satisfaction from the authorities there; but they were as obdurate as at Algiers, and two prizes were all that fell to his captains' luck.

Meanwhile Aston had succeeded in demonstrating to the Government at Madrid the falsity of the charges against Mansell, and had been able to assure him that the promised squadron of galleys was to meet him at Alicante, as well as three brigantines or light galleys from Valencia. To Alicante therefore he hurried, staying on his way to victual at Malaga. It was not till the end of March that he reached his destination, and no galleys were there. It was hardly likely they would be. Spanish business was at a standstill, for Philip III. was just dead and Philip IV. reigned in his stead. Still, the three brigantines were at his service, and there was a fast polacca for sale. The one he bought and the others he chartered, determined, it would seem, to carry out his design on Algiers with or without the galleys. It was at least a bold resolve. The port which had baffled the whole might of the great Emperor Charles V. had come to be let alone. Not even Osuna had dared to touch it, and by all Mediterranean authority it was regarded as a place impregnable to any kind of attack. English merchants who knew it were of the same opinion, but the navy men had looked into it for themselves, and took a hardier view. They had come to teach and not to learn, and they were convinced there was a way of at least drawing its teeth. It is easy to laugh at their insular confidence, but their resolution cannot be dismissed so lightly. Before judging them we should remember the ugly reputation which Algiers had enjoyed, reign after

reign, as it sat secure and defiant in the very jaws of the Spanish sea power, and then perhaps we may give Mansell and his officers due credit, not only for their breezy contempt of precedent, but for the care and forethought with which they prepared to prove their case.

The first weeks of April were spent in organising the fleet for the intended operation. The brigantines and the polacca were armed and manned so as to form with the boats of the galleons the oared squadron which the attempt demanded.<sup>1</sup> The two prizes were prepared as fire-ships, and a quantity of incendiary projectiles, or 'fireworks' as they were then called, manufactured, and the men constantly exercised at the work that lay before them. When all was nearly complete, further letters arrived from England, by way of Malaga, saying that a new consignment of stores had reached that port, and probably authorising Mansell to proceed with his enterprise. At any rate, a week later he sailed for Minorca to take in wood and water, and May 1 was holding away for Algiers. On the 20th they were before the port, and came to anchor in a way which, like everything else in this expedition, points to a growing spirit of order and discipline in the royal service at least equal to anything in the time of Elizabeth. Exact directions had been prepared for every state of the wind, and the evolution was executed with a quite modern exactitude, the King's ships bringing up first to mark the line, and the merchant-

<sup>1</sup> At this time the Polacre or Polacca, like the brigantine, was an oared vessel, not manned by slaves, but rowed by the crew that worked the sails when the wind was fair. The *Journal* says that this one was of 120 tons, and in his orders to Penington to send a contingent to man it, Mansell calls it the Satia or Polakra (*S. P. Dom.* cccx. 81). The Saettia was the smallest and swiftest form of such craft. See *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, i. 11. The brigantines had nine oars a side.

men taking up their stations astern of them in the squadron intervals they had left. The line was roughly parallel with the shore, and centred on the Mole, while six merchantmen were told off to ply between the rear-most ship and the shore to prevent any vessel either entering or leaving the harbour.

The harbour itself appears to have been crowded with shipping that had taken refuge there from the operations of the various squadrons that were at work against them, and having thus completely closed the port so that none could escape, Mansell prepared for an immediate attack with his oared squadron. It was organised in two divisions: first the 'boats of execution,' in which were included the fire-ships, the brigantines, and the polacca; and secondly seven 'boats of rescue,' which were to support the 'boats of execution' and protect them from an attack by galleys. But towards evening the wind, which had been fair all day, died away, and the attempt had to be deferred. The same thing happened the next night, but on the third day the fair wind held, and the 'boats of execution' advanced. All went well, and the fire-ships were already off the head of the Mole when the wind chopped round and they could advance no further. But the assailants were not yet beaten. Under a heavy fire the oared craft made an attempt to tow the fire-ships forward. It was slow work; the fire grew hotter and hotter, and the men began to hesitate. To tow in the fire-ships in face of such a fire was clearly impossible. For a moment there was thought of a retreat; but Captain Hughes, who had command of one of the brigantines, shouted out to cast off the fire-ships and go in with the boats alone. The advance was immediately resumed, while Hawkins and Button in person went boldly in and brought off the derelict fire-ships. In dashing style the whole of the

boats rowed for the fleet, shouting 'King James! King James! God bless King James!' Once alongside the pirate vessels they were masked from the enemy's fire, and they proceeded to bring their 'fireworks' into play. With little loss they succeeded in getting the fleet well alight in seven different places, and then, still shouting triumphantly for King James, they drew off. But, as ill luck would have it, by this time the wind had again completely died away. There was no breeze to nourish the flames, and the fire spread very slowly. As the boats retired the Algerines found heart to come out from their shelter, and poured in so heavy a fire that to return to the smouldering fleet was impossible. Worse still, it began to rain, and the end of it was that the pirates were able to extinguish the flames before much damage had been done. It was a bitter disappointment. The attempt had been well conceived, and carried out with boldness and precision. No blame seems to have attached to any one, nor is it easy to see what more could have been done. It was sheer ill luck, but the fact remained that the attempt had failed.<sup>1</sup>

Still Mansell did not despair. His fire-ships, by the gallantry of Hawkins and Button, were still intact, his boats were safe, his loss small, and his men still full of spirit. Though he drew off, it was not with the intention of retiring, but apparently because the weather compelled him. Four days after the attempt he issued orders that the fleet was still to keep together in one body, that

<sup>1</sup> The names of the officers who conducted the attack are on record. The fire-ships were commanded by Captains Walsingham and Stokes, the brigantines by Hughes, Tall, and Pepwell, the seven 'boats of rescue' by Captain Frampton (Lieutenant to Hawkins, 'Vanguard'), Captain Winker (Lieutenant to Palmer, 'Reformation'), Captain Turner (Lieutenant to Mansell, 'Lion'), Captain Dodge (Lieutenant to Tanfield, 'Centurion'), Frewen (Lieutenant to Haughton, 'Neptune'), Button (nephew and Lieutenant to Sir Thomas Button, 'Rainbow'), and Captain Boyes.

no wide chasing was to be permitted, and that he was going back to Algiers Road, which was to be the rendezvous so long as they were on the coast, for he intended to pursue the attempt he had begun.<sup>1</sup>

During his absence four pirate vessels had managed to slip in, but two others had been destroyed and another captured, and the Algerine galleys which tried to rescue her beaten off. Mansell's idea was to continue the blockade and watch for another opportunity of sending in his fire-ships. Unhappily the time was past. Some escaped prisoners informed him that the harbour had been securely boomed, and that, as for any hope of more prizes, precautions had been taken all along the coast to warn approaching vessels of their danger. It was not till then that the admirals owned themselves beaten. Disease was daily sapping their strength; it seemed useless to remain, and on June 1 they were heading back for Alicante, where they hoped to hear of reinforcements from home.<sup>2</sup>

As things stood when they had left England, the idea had certainly been that the fleet was to be continually nourished with fresh ships and supplies in order that it might remain in the Mediterranean for at least three years, till the pirate power was broken, or so long as it seemed desirable to threaten Spain. During the spring of 1621 two

<sup>1</sup> Order to Penington, May 29, 1621, *S. P. Dom.* cxxi. 56.

<sup>2</sup> The main authority for the above is the *Journal* or log already referred to. A printed copy with sarcastic but not too well-informed notes in John Coke's hand is in *S. P. Dom.* cxxii. 106. His comments must be received with caution, for during all the last half of 1620 he was on leave attending to his private affairs in the country, and was apparently ignorant of the restrictions under which Mansell had sailed (see *Coke MSS.*, *Hist. MSS. Com.* xii. i. 208-9). The author of the *Journal* is unknown, but internal evidence shows that he was in Hawkins's squadron aboard Arthur Mainwaring's ship, the 'Constant Reformation,' until early in April that officer died of disease at Malaga. Palmer succeeded Mainwaring, and requested the author to remain with him, but he preferred to go to Sir Francis Tanfield in the 'Centurion,' a merchantman. Monson's criticism (*Tracts*, p. 256),

fine galleons, the 'Victory' and 'Dreadnought,' had actually been put in commission for the purpose. In May the merchants were called upon to maintain their ships on the station for six months longer, and at the end of the month the captains of the two King's ships received their orders to join. Then suddenly a change came over the situation. Gondomar had never ceased to protest and cajole until finally he had succeeded in winning over Buckingham as securely as he had gained the King. In this difficult task the Spaniard's persuasive personality was assisted by the folly of the Dutch. Their behaviour in the East Indies was growing daily more intolerable. In spite of treaties and promises, they continued impudently to assert their right to exclude English vessels from the most profitable trading areas, and to assert it with every kind of outrage. This was England's reward for having kept the seas for them through the long years of their struggle for independence; this was her reward for having supported the first halting steps of their sea power, and suffered it to grow up under the shelter of her own. England had stood loyally beside her, pouring out blood and treasure for the freedom of the high seas, and the first use the Dutch sought to make of their success was to force

from which later writers have usually taken their cue, appears no less unfair and ill-informed than Coke's when compared with the *Journal* and the despatches. The principal ones are as follows:—Three from Mansell to Buckingham, dated January 13, June 9, and July 10, in *Harleian MSS.* 1581; another in *S.P. Foreign, Barbary States* (dated July 17); two others to the Lords Commissioners (*ibid.*), one dated conjecturally 'December 1620,' but probably about January 12, 1621, since in his despatch of January 13 Mansell says he had just finished it, and the other dated July 16; one to Calvert, Secretary of State in *S.P. Spain* dated March 15. Two others to Cranfield, dated January 22 and March 15, are among the *De la Warr Papers* (*Hist. MSS. Com.* iv. 282*b*). Three orders issued to Penington, giving further details of the movements of the fleet, are in *S.P. Dom.* cxx. 81 (April 12) and 112 (April 25); cxxi. 56 (May 29). The *Aston Papers* contain many documents besides those already quoted which throw much new light on the whole affair.

themselves into the exclusive position from which Spain had been dragged. There was an old superstition, well known to seamen, that if you save a man from drowning he will one day do you some fatal injury. The adage seemed coming true for England and Holland, and already the winds were whispering that before England could be a power in the Mediterranean she must establish her dominion of the North Sea. The struggle was to be long and bloody, and its first mutterings were in the air.

Gondomar was not a man to miss his hour. Buckingham's pride as Lord High Admiral was such that he was coming to regard every injury to a British ship as a personal affront. It was easy for the skilled Ambassador to foster his annoyance till he persuaded him that it was far better to use the royal ships in chastising the insolent Burghers than in keeping them out on a service which his master could only view with distrust and dislike. The result was that when Mansell reached Alicante he found neither 'Victory' nor 'Dreadnought.' In their place were orders to send home at once four of the King's ships. With the whole fleet he went round to Cadiz, whence, the second week in July, he despatched Hawkins and Button homewards. With them went the 'Lion,' 'Rainbow,' 'Reformation' and 'Antelope,' and some of the less seaworthy merchantmen, while with the rest Mansell remained where he was to await stores and orders.

Having thus reduced his force to a point at which they had nothing to fear from it the Spaniards became all politeness. Eager to see him spend his strength on the common enemy, they offered him everything he wanted, and a whole squadron of galleys if he would again attack Algiers. Mansell was nothing loath. An officer was sent to Madrid to arrange the affair, orders were issued for a galley squadron to mobilise at Malaga in accordance

with Mansell's desire, and so well was he supplied from the Cadiz stores that on the last day of July he was able to sail for Gibraltar to join hands with the galleys.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile relations with the Dutch were going from bad to worse. Their truce with Spain had come to an end; the old war was raging again, and ever since its renewal they had been seeking to establish a commercial blockade of the Spanish Netherlands. International law on the subject was not so clear then as it is now, and James, hurt in his dignity as Lord of the Narrow Seas, would not admit their right to stay anything but enemy's goods and contraband of war. It was a disagreement for which there was no solution but force, and the result was that Hawkins and Button, on their way home, received orders to intercept the homeward-bound Dutch East India fleet by way of reprisal. Nor was this all. James's genius for putting himself in the wrong, and playing false cards, prompted him to send orders to Mansell to bring home the rest of his fleet to guard the Narrow Seas. Nothing could have been more ill-timed. In Vienna was Digby on his hopeless mission for the restoration of the Palatinate to the King's son-in-law, and for the removal of the Imperial ban. Having succeeded in getting a partial suspension of hostilities from the Emperor, he was about to proceed to Madrid in pursuance of the King's orders, and, feeling acutely the weakness of his hand, was imploring James to keep Mansell where he was. Even as the admiral's recall was being penned he was writing his urgent appeal: 'I must earnestly,' he said, 'recommend the continuing abroad yet for some small time of Sir Robert Mansell's fleet upon the coast of Spain, which, in case his Majesty should be ill-used, will prove the best

<sup>1</sup> Mansell to Aston, July 4 and 31; Aston to Buckingham, July 26; Sir John Fearn's instructions for Madrid; *Aston Papers*, ii.

argument he can use for the restitution of the Palatinate.' The King, it would seem, repented of his haste and made an effort to recall the false step he had taken. But even so it was only in a way that added degradation to his fatuity. Gondomar was consulted as to whether his master would take it ill if Mansell remained on the station. Seeing what was going on in Spain, the Ambassador had naturally no objection to offer. Indeed he wished for nothing better. His only aim had been to reduce Mansell to impotence, not to remove him altogether, and he had overshot the mark. He hastened therefore to explain that his master had no objection whatever to the operations against the pirates being continued. Indeed he begged that the two royal galleons and the ten merchantmen that had remained with Mansell might keep the seas. His master, he said, had already provided the admiral with fire-ships and combustibles to renew his attempt, and he was ready to see him furnished with provisions till they could be supplied from home. James replied that his reason for recalling Mansell was merely that his brother of Spain seemed jealous of the enterprise, and agreed to send orders for him to continue his operations.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not this apparent complacency on James's part was to cover a resolution to support Digby at Madrid with a fresh naval demonstration, it was already too late to recover the lost ground. On September 15 the Order in Council was passed, calling on the merchants to provide their ships for a further period of service, and a week later Mansell, in answer to his original recall, appeared in the Downs with all his following.

So ended the first attempt of a British Government to

<sup>1</sup> Calvert to Cranfield, *De la Warr Papers*; *Hist. MSS. Com.* iv. 305a, September 12, 1621; and Gardiner, iv. 227.

influence the European situation by the presence of a royal fleet in the Mediterranean. It is remembered now only for its failure at Algiers, a failure that a little luck would have turned to a memorable success, and perhaps reacted on the policy of Spain in a way that cannot now be measured. At the time the true significance of Mansell's fleet was recognised in all the cabinets concerned. The Spanish Ambassador indeed seemed to measure his success by his power of controlling its action and its energy, and, little as it accomplished, the lesson was never forgotten, either at home or abroad; nor from that time forth did the potentiality of English action in the Mediterranean ever cease to be a factor in European diplomacy.

## CHAPTER IX

### RICHELIEU'S INVITATION

FOR the time Gondomar's dexterity had removed the fear of English action in the Mediterranean from the counsels of the Hapsburg alliance, but from the day Mansell passed the Straits it was never lost sight of. For two years more James and his Government continued to be amused with the prospect of a Spanish marriage that was to give peace to Europe, and the British navy danced attendance; but no sooner did the return of Prince Charles and Buckingham from Spain, empty-handed, make war inevitable than the idea immediately recurred. Still it was not in England that the situation was first appreciated. Elizabethan traditions were still vigorous, and Mansell's venture had done little to break them. For the most part English naval strategists were still where Drake had left them, and the idea of war with Spain was still war as Drake had made it. It was abroad, where the Hapsburg alliance was pressing most severely, that the changed conditions were best understood.

In the two years of James's inaction the alliance had made formidable strides. Heidelberg had fallen and the Palatinate was completely lost, and even in the far North the Scandinavian powers were beginning to see their neighbour's wall was on fire. From Antwerp to Seville the Hapsburg territory was now a continuous whole. The Valtelline, which formed the connecting link by way of the Tyrol, had been seized, and though there had been

a pretence of surrendering it to the custody of the Pope, it was still occupied by Spanish troops. There was thus a channel through which, by way of Genoa and Milan, the wealth of the Indies and all that it meant could freely pass to nourish the resources of the Empire and feed the war in Central Europe. If the Scandinavian powers began to take alarm, no less so did France, as the revived Hapsburg system embraced her in an ever tightening grip, and her fears were shared by the other two Catholic opponents of Spain, Venice and Savoy.

The success of the Hapsburg alliance had placed it at last in antagonism to all the rest of Europe. But it was not a solid opposition, and there was the weak point. It was broadly divided into two great camps, the Protestants to the North and the Catholics to the South, and each group had naturally a different view of the way in which the great alliance was to be fought. The Protestant group inclined to what might be called a frontal attack on the Empire, which, by military operations from the northward, would force Austria to recoil within its old lines. The Catholic powers, on the contrary, saw the vital point in the centre, as was natural from their position, and they would have sought to break the alliance at the joint. The weak points in the Hapsburg chain were the Valtelline, as it lay threatened by all three powers of the Catholic group, and the Western Mediterranean, where at Genoa the link between Madrid and Milan lay open to naval attack. The eyes of France were fixed upon the Valtelline; those of Savoy, as always, upon Genoa; but in neither case exclusively, for an attack on either point would so materially assist the other that they formed practically one operation. Each group was naturally anxious to see the weight of England thrown upon its own chosen objective, and James was soon besieged with

contradictory proposals for a common effort against the common foe.

At first the line of action most favoured by the British Government was that of the Northern Protestants; but this did not exclude the possibility of persuading Savoy and Venice to reopen their old harassing at the centre, and thither, as early as 1624, was sent Sir Isaac Wake 'to encourage' them to play their part. His first point was Turin, the Duke of Savoy's capital, and there the timid diplomat found himself handling thunderbolts before he had time to turn round. No sooner did he arrive than the Duke began pressing on him the old Genoa scheme of Raleigh's time. 'There is no need to encourage him,' groaned the overweighted envoy; 'his pulse doth beat so strong of itself.' In vain he tried to get on to Venice. The Duke would not let him go. He was entirely confident of success. He had charts, plans, and models of the city, and would not part with the Englishman till he had laid the complete scheme before him. It was some time before he could do this, for France was equally hot for her own design, and each state was trying to see how deeply she could get the other committed before she showed her own hand. At last, in August, Wake was able to send home the complete proposal. Fifty thousand foot were to be raised and paid, half by England and half by Savoy; three thousand cavalry were to be provided by Savoy, and, as their equivalent, England was to equip a fleet of twenty sail. James's name need not appear unless he liked. All he provided could be under his son-in-law's flag; and as for Venice, he need have no anxiety, for she too would have to play her part. Genoa at this time was for all purposes of foreign policy a mere protectorate of Spain. Therefore, although an attack on her by Savoy would not be technically a breach

with the Hapsburgs, it would be so in effect. It would be like thrusting a firebrand into the centre of the inflammable heap, and would serve to set on fire the whole of Europe that was not already blazing. Venice must come in with the rest; and as for France, she was only waiting for Savoy to begin the dance. Such was the incendiary proposal which Wake had to send home, begging that, if it were accepted, some one more capable and with stronger nerves might be sent to take his place.<sup>1</sup>

The scheme, however, was not immediately accepted. To gain time for reflection Wake was instructed to apply for further details, especially in regard to its financial aspects. The fact was that the British Government had another iron in the fire, which promised to burn deeper than Savoy. No sooner had the failure of Charles and Buckingham at Madrid given the death-blow to the weary Spanish marriage than negotiations were reopened for finding the Prince a bride in France. In November the preliminary treaty was signed, and by its terms England and France were allies for the subversion of the Hapsburgs. In the meantime France had formed a definite league with Savoy and Venice for wresting the Valtelline from Spanish hands, and the first advantage she meant to draw from the proposed marriage was to add England to the party. This was Richelieu's idea of meeting the threatened domination of the House of Austria—undoubtedly more sound and comprehensive than James's narrow aim at the recovery of the Palatinate and the restoration of the *status quo* in Germany. If the Hapsburg structure could be severed at the centre, the rest would easily follow. All that seemed necessary to

<sup>1</sup> *S.P. Foreign, Savoy*, Aug. 9, 1624.

insure success was to prevent Spain using the advantage of her command of the Western Mediterranean to paralyse the action of Savoy. The fitful maritime power which France from time to time had painfully created on her Southern coast had sunk again to its lowest ebb. Without the aid of the Northern sea powers it was clear Spain must retain her command and the freedom of her communication with Italy; and so it came about that of all the far-reaching consequences that were to flow from the mating of the sparkling little French princess with James's solemn son, none were of deeper significance than the first. For it was nothing else than an invitation from France to England that she should assert her yet unmeasured influence on continental policy by naval operations in the Mediterranean.

If ever a great minister's dreams are haunted with dim visions of what his policy may breed far beyond the limits of his furthest sight, surely Richelieu must have lain uneasy the night he let the proposal go. He might have seen that sea, which seemed made as a bridge for France to march to empire, disturbed with the passage of mighty fleets that were to change its nature—turning it to a fosse which barred her progress and thrust her back to wither upon the exhausted soil of her birthright.

As it was, the proposal came humbly enough to give no hint of all it might mean. It was in the form of a suggestion from Marshal Lesdignières, the officer in command of the French army which was assembling to support the Duke of Savoy in his projected attack on Genoa. The suggestion was addressed to the Netherlands as well as England, and was purely naval in character. England was to incur no expense and no responsibility. All that was asked was that the King

of France should be allowed to hire twenty ships of war in each country. They were to sail under the French flag, and to be in all respects a French force. The Dutch at once consented. Buckingham, whose imaginative mind was filled with the most grandiose ideas for the coming war, easily persuaded James to do the same. It was therefore understood that the French marshal, in his forthcoming filibustering attack on Genoa, was to have twenty English men-of-war at his disposal.

This was in the winter of 1624. In spite of the despairing efforts of Spain to avert the threatened conflagration, every one believed it would break out in the ensuing spring. In England a great fleet was to be mobilised for immediate action, but at present no one knew what its destination would be. Following Elizabethan precedent, the direction of all operations for the recovery of the Palatinate had been placed in the hands of a supreme Council of War. It numbered among its members the best of the later Elizabethans: St. John, Lord Deputy of Ireland; George Carew, who had saved Munster from Spain in 1600; Fulke Greville, Sidney's old companion, together with the most accomplished and experienced soldiers of the new school that had grown up in the Low Countries under the Fighting Veres. The naval members were Mansell and Button, the best that were to be had since Richard Hawkins was dead. Their influence upon England's attitude was something more than consultative, for in effect they were trustees of the funds which the Commons had voted for the war.

In a bold effort to grasp a part of the executive power, which had always been the King's, the House had sought to lay down the broad lines on which the war was to be conducted. This was the famous resolution of 'the Four Points.' James, fixed to his narrow view of recovering

the Palatinate, was obstinately bent on confining the war to military operations in Germany, and on offending Spain as little as possible. Parliament, believing Spain was still the all-powerful instrument of all the trouble, and instinctively feeling the strength of England was on the sea, was as earnestly opposed to distant military adventures and as obstinately bent on reviving the old war which James had so prematurely closed. The four points for which they stipulated were the setting in order of the coast defences, making provision for the security of Ireland, assisting the Dutch with troops, and mobilising the navy. In short, they were set upon a war conducted exactly on the old Elizabethan lines—that is, in effect, a defensive war tempered by remunerative operations against Spanish trade and colonies. Of the changed situation which had been brought about by the increased power of the Empire and her chief allies they were in apparent ignorance. The King of course would not accept the position they arrogated. He told them it was enough that the money they voted could not be touched without the consent of the Treasurers whom they were to appoint; but as for the conduct of the war, that must depend on the advice of the Council of War. 'Whether,' said he, 'I shall send twenty thousand or ten thousand, whether by land or sea, east or west, by diversion or otherwise, by invasion upon the Bavarian or the Emperor, you must leave that to the King.' And so indeed it was left, the arrangement being that the Parliamentary Treasurers were to issue money on the warrant of the Council of War, and not otherwise.

The French proposal, therefore, was outside the view of either party, and yet it fell in with both. For James it would be a valuable diversion in favour of the land operations for the recovery of the Palatinate; for the

popular view it was naval, productive, and valuable as a preoccupation for the Spanish fleet. For the King it had the special recommendation of enabling him in some small degree to do his duty to his son-in-law without openly breaking with Spain. No step could be more characteristic, and it was practically the last he took. It was the end of March 1625, and already as the sound of war grew loud in his ears he lay upon his death-bed tormented with the din he could not hush. The southern counties were swarming with unruly recruits who were to serve abroad under Count Mansfeldt. The ports were crowded with clamouring skippers whose vessels had been requisitioned as transports. Twelve ships of the royal navy were being equipped for their escort and some further great adventure, and the squadron that was to pass into the French service was being pushed on. And so at last, amid the noise and disturbance of vast preparations for the war, which he had disgraced himself to prevent, the fever-stricken King passed away.

Every scheme to which he had set his hand most devoutly had failed—everything, perhaps, except the regeneration of the navy. The five years which the Commission had given itself to do the work were past, and the programme had been carried out to the letter. In spite of the extraordinary calls that had been made upon them by Mansell's expedition and Charles's escapade to Spain, the fleet had been kept in good order; ten new ships had been added to it, and the expense reduced by about a half. However barren of purpose James's reign may appear, this must never be forgotten. The navy had been placed on a businesslike footing, and had been confirmed as the pride and mainstay of the country. Of his position as Lord of the Narrow Seas James was at least as proud as of his pose as head of the reformed

religion. His interest in the navy had never flagged. He sat in person to decide disputes on the most technical questions; he never missed a launch; he made his second son Lord High Admiral, and only displaced him when he became Prince of Wales to make room for his chosen favourite. Less consciously, but still as the direct result of his trust in the navy, he inaugurated a new field for its action. Feebly as the new policy had been started, it was a precedent that had been set. The door was opened never to be entirely shut. In spite of failure and disappointment, one of the last acts of his well-meaning reign had been to push his sea power forward on its new career, and on his troubled death-bed he had once more stretched out his shaking hand in answer to the calling of the Mediterranean.

## CHAPTER X

### NAVAL STRATEGY UNDER CHARLES I.

No king perhaps ever succeeded quietly to a throne with such a sea of troubles boiling round him as did Charles, and the first to scald him was the question of the squadron with which England was to make herself felt in the Mediterranean.

When the idea was first mooted, there can be no doubt that there was a real intention to use the force for breaking into the centre of the Hapsburg position through Genoa. But, before the agreement had been signed, France had had forced upon her a wholly different use for it. In January 1625 the Duke of Soubise, the great Huguenot chief, exasperated with the King's failure to carry out the terms of the late pacification, had suddenly thrown himself upon Blavet, the new headquarters of the French navy, and had carried off into Rochelle all the six royal vessels he found there. By April the Huguenots were once more in open rebellion; and all hope of reducing Rochelle to obedience was gone unless a fleet could be procured. There could be no doubt, therefore, how Louis would use the borrowed ships if he got them. Still, for the Dutch it was too late to draw back. In the throes of their new contest with Spain, which so far had not gone too well with them, they dared not offend France, and Louis had the prospects of a fresh pacification with his Protestant rebels to make their

consent easy. So the Dutch contingent sailed, and at its head was Haultain, Vice-Admiral of Zeeland.

For England, in the toils of her new alliance with the French Crown, there was scarcely less difficulty; and when, on the eve of the old King's death, Buckingham agreed to lend the 'Vanguard' of the royal navy and seven merchantmen, he must have known their destination. If at the time his airy assurance and indifference to public opinion had seen no difficulties in the path, they began quickly to spring into view. In April Sir John Penington, who was to command, was ready for sea; but Sir Ferdinando Gorges, his vice-admiral, could not be got to join. He had been Elizabeth's Governor of Plymouth, and was a personification of all the Protestantism militant of her reign. It was not till the admirals had been assured that they would not have to fight Huguenots that they could be got to take the squadron across to Dieppe. Still, both officers and men were far from easy, and, as the day approached for Parliament to meet, Buckingham himself became nervous. He tried to gain time by informing the admiral he was not to give up the squadron till he had escorted the new Queen to England. On June 9 Penington at last sailed; but no sooner was he in contact with French conversation than his eyes were opened. Till he had further orders he refused to have any dealings with the French officers who were commissioned to take over the ships, and, finally winding a design to seize his squadron, he quietly put to sea and returned to the English coast.

Meanwhile Parliament had met and had received the statement of the Government. There had been a suggestion of further subsidies, but it had fallen flat, and there was clearly trouble ahead. Before a new money grant could be considered, there were inquiries to be made.

The war policy, which the Commons had so clearly defined in the resolution of the Four Points, had practically been set at nought. Their Council of War had been induced to grant subsidies and raise an army for operations in Germany, which was what they particularly intended to forbid. The naval forces had been mobilised, but not in the way they had plainly indicated. They had intended the mobilisation as a precautionary measure in view of the powerful fleet that had then been assembling in Spain; but it was now known that that fleet had sailed to dispossess the Dutch from the lodgment they had made in Brazil, and all fear of an invasion was at an end. Still an enormous fleet was being prepared clearly for some offensive operations, for ten thousand troops were being pressed, and transports taken up wholesale. Who had sanctioned it? What was the enemy? No war had been declared, and part at least of the naval forces were going to assist a Catholic king who was at war with his Protestant subjects. Vast sums had been spent for the recovery of the Palatinate, and less than no good done. The army that had been raised for Mansfeldt had rotted away from neglect and disease, and, in spite of the crowd of ships that had been so long in commission, the Salee pirates were swarming in the Narrow Seas and insulting the very coasts.

It was clear something must be done to mend matters. The plague was raging in London, and the occasion was seized to adjourn Parliament to meet at Oxford on August 1. Still it was by no means easy to know what to do in the meantime with Penington. He had to be ordered back to Dieppe, and yet could not be allowed to give up his ships. The only solution that occurred to the Government was to instruct him to get his men to mutiny. This he did with no little success as soon as he reached Dieppe,

and on July 25 his crew carried their officers back again to England. Meanwhile, however, peace had been signed with Rochelle. Lesdignières had rapidly driven the Spanish garrisons from the Valtelline, and with his colleague of Savoy had overrun the Genoese territory almost to the gates of the capital. But there he was checked. He knew it was madness to attempt the city itself without support from the sea, and with all the weight of his name he had been pressing for an accommodation with the Huguenots in order that the borrowed fleet might still be placed at his disposal. Now, therefore, that peace was made, Richelieu was able to assure the English Government that their ships would certainly be used in the Mediterranean according to the original plan, and Penington received final orders to deliver them up. The transfer actually took place on August 3, but the crews absolutely refused to serve, and the French got only the bare ships, nor indeed all of them, for Sir Ferdinando Gorges, staunch to his faith, was not to be persuaded, and deserted ship and all.

Thus the most pressing cause of offence was removed; but no sooner had Parliament reassembled than it was clear the way was barely smoothed. The great expedition with its hundred sail and ten thousand troops had still to be explained. It had certainly been Buckingham's intention that it should sail and win him glory before Parliament could meet, and to this end the Houses had been twice prorogued. He intended to take the command himself, under a commission from the Prince Palatine, so as to avoid as long as possible a formal rupture of the peace between England and Spain. The original idea had been apparently something in Drake's manner on the Spanish coast. Then he had tried to persuade the Prince of Orange into a joint attack on the Spanish Netherlands.

The main inducement to the latter line of action was the growing menace of Dunkirk. During the peace, Spain had been making serious efforts to increase her sea power, and among other means had instituted a system of *almirantazgos*, whereby chartered trading companies in return for their privileges were called upon to maintain a war-fleet. One of these, to the number of twenty-four sail, was now established at Dunkirk, where naval architecture and seamanship had reached a point unsurpassed in Europe.<sup>1</sup> The Dutch were blockading it with fair success, but, so long as the Dunkirk squadron existed, the command of the Narrow Seas was not secure. The destruction of the port was in fact an operation of the first importance. Sound strategy demanded it as a necessary preliminary to the effective conduct of the war on whatever lines it was eventually to be waged, and so keen was Buckingham on the new project that he actually went over to Paris to induce Louis to co-operate. The mission was a complete failure. So far from succeeding in dragging France into a war with Spain, he entirely alienated the French King by making love to his wife. So, before Parliament met, the new project had been abandoned and he had gone back to the vague intentions of a campaign to the southward.<sup>2</sup>

It was to provide against inexperienced levity of this kind that Parliament had sought to tie the all-powerful Lord Admiral's hands with a board of experts; and no sooner did the question of supply come up again than it was roundly suggested that the expedition had never been sanctioned or even considered by the Council of War. The only member of it sitting in the House was Sir

<sup>1</sup> Duro, iv. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, v. 325 *et seq.* 'Buckingham's Instructions,' May 1625, *Coke MSS.* p. 201.

Robert Mansell. It was a direct challenge to him to speak, but he held his peace while the debate waxed hotter and hotter. At length he could contain himself no longer. It was to Buckingham he owed his fall from power, and he rose to deal his supplanter a blow from which he never really recovered. There had, he said, been some meetings of the Council, but he had not been present at any since February last. At that time the question of levying an army to accompany the fleet had been raised, and he had refused to vote upon it, because Sir John Coke, a minister and partisan of Buckingham's, was present, and he was not a member of the Council. He appears, however, to have intimated that he regarded the force proposed to be too small to effect anything, and a useless expense. He had an alternative project of his own which he was certain would do more for the Palatinate than anything that could be hoped from the plan before them. Conway, however, who, though also a Secretary of State, was on the Council of War, had cut him short by saying that the question before the Council had been merely what arms they were to sanction for the force. Whether it was to be raised or not was not for them to discuss, and thereupon Mansell appears to have retired. This was probably just the kind of thing the House had suspected, and so deep was the sensation made by Mansell's speech that they immediately adjourned the debate. On the morrow, to make matters worse, there came up lamentable reports of the havoc the Salee pirates and Dunkirkers had been committing on British subjects. The navy ships had done next to nothing, and Mansell protested it was their orders that were at fault, and again the Council of War had not been consulted. Everywhere upon the high seas and even in their own waters Englishmen had been treated with contempt, and

not a single insult had been resented. Fuel was added to the fire till it blazed out in Sir Francis Seymour's cry, 'Let us lay the fault where it is. The Duke of Buckingham is trusted. It must needs be him or his agents.'

The crisis was fast growing in intensity, and the next day the Solicitor-General was put up to answer Mansell's accusation. But though he made it appear that the only reason why Mansell had not been further consulted was that he had absented himself from the sittings out of pique, he could not show the design in hand had ever been sanctioned by the Council of War. Mansell's reply was that of a man broken and crushed by a grievance. He was obliged to admit he had a private quarrel with the Duke; he whined querulously of his ancestors, of their devotion to the Crown, and his own; he cried for an inquiry into his conduct at Algiers; he vowed that he would make it good with his life that Buckingham's expedition, manned and victualled as it was, was doomed to failure; and wound up protesting he neither desired the good will nor feared the hatred of the great Duke, but, sailor-like, only wished to do his duty. The impression he made was not good. Yet it was none the less clear that the Government had refused to listen to the scheme of the Vice-Admiral of England, who was also the only man on the Council of War with any long naval experience; that they had pursued a plan which he pronounced ridiculous; that they had concealed from him the design which was finally adopted; and that, in answer to his protest, he had been told the plan of campaign lay with Buckingham, not with the board of experts to whom Parliament had specially confided the direction of the war. If Mansell's position had been shaken, that of the King and Buckingham was made no firmer, and the broken admiral sat down among whispers that Charles had already made

out a commission for a dissolution. It was true enough. Buckingham could face no more, and, before anything could be done, Charles's first Parliament had ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

So without money, counsel, or settled purpose the expedition went forward. September came, and the fleet still lay huddled in Plymouth, unable to sail. The season had passed, according to all Elizabethan precedent, for such an expedition: the soldiers were dying in hundreds of the plague, and yet Buckingham clung obstinately to his idea. What it was nobody knew, if indeed he knew clearly himself. The West Indies, the Azores, the Canaries, the ports of the Spanish Atlantic seaboard—all were discussed and their chances reckoned. Some even still believed that something in the Mediterranean was the object. The best naval opinion knew that an attack upon Genoa from the sea was impracticable unless an adequate base for the fleet could be first established in the vicinity. Such a base either Corsica or Sardinia would furnish, and the occupation of either of those islands was well within the capacity of the expedition.<sup>2</sup> Yet there can be no doubt that such an objective had never been seriously contemplated, and the fact that it was mentioned is therefore the more interesting as showing how small was the importance as yet attached to the strategical possibilities of the Mediterranean by English experts. It is of course possible that this or something like it was Mansell's alternative proposal, but of this we know nothing. Monson, who by this time had developed into a very advanced theorist, certainly rejected the notion. But it must be said for him that he rejected it in favour of a proposal still more sound.

The eyes of the old Elizabethan admiral were

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *Debates in the House of Commons*, 1625, C.S. 1873, pp. 115, 123, 147, 161.

<sup>2</sup> Monson, *Tracts*, p. 262.

fixed on the Spanish navy, and he saw it at the mercy of the English fleet. During the recent reorganisation of the Spanish maritime forces, they had been greatly strengthened, and, at least on paper, Spain had never been so powerful at sea. Besides the three local squadrons of the North, provided similarly to those of our own Cinque Ports by the provinces of Guipuscoa, Biscay, and Galicia, three royal squadrons were established—one for the Crown of Castile of forty-six sail, another for Portugal of ten sail, and the third for Flanders of twenty sail. From these a permanent fleet of twenty sail was established for the Straits, and the rest formed the Ocean Guard. Besides these there was also the formidable Neapolitan squadron, which was composed of Osuna's old fleet under his Admiral Ribera. The system was so far complete that when, in May 1624, the Dutch East India Company seized San Salvador in Brazil, a fleet of fifty-two sail with twelve thousand men had been sent to recover it before the year was out. Still it was not till the end of April 1625 that the invading force, which consisted of Dutch, English, and Germans, was forced to capitulate, and the victorious fleet, exhausted or unseaworthy with its prolonged effort, was coming home. This was known in England during the summer, and in Monson's eyes the obvious thing to do was to dismiss the troops and transports, as Essex had done in 1597, and despatch a purely naval force to surprise and crush the homeward bound Spanish fleet at the Azores. Such a blow would have been the most severe that Spain could receive. Theoretically Monson's idea was obviously right, but there were reasons why, even if it had been adopted, success was far from assured.

Strange as it may seem, although the fleet at Plymouth was one of the most powerful that had ever been

fitted out for such a service in England, it had not a single admiral on its staff. Mansell and Button were both more or less in disgrace, Sir Richard Hawkins was dead, Monson was not even consulted, while Palmer and Penington were employed in the Narrow Seas. Buckingham himself was to command, with Sir Edward Cecil, a Low Country soldier, for his Marshal or chief of the staff. His vice-admiral was the Earl of Essex, his rear-admiral the Earl of Denbigh, neither of whom had ever held a command at sea, and the flag officers of the three squadrons were mostly noblemen of as little experience. The captain of Buckingham's ship, an officer who in those days corresponded in some degree to a modern captain of the fleet, was Thomas Love. Beyond the fact that he had been on the Council of War and had commanded a King's ship in Mansell's expedition, nothing is known of his previous service; and yet this man was relied on throughout as the chief naval adviser. The only other seamen on the Council of War of the expedition were Argall and Chudleigh, both of whom had commanded merchantmen against Algiers, and possibly Sir John Watts, who appears to have been grandson of the great London privateer owner of Elizabeth's time. Monson, who, in spite of the contempt with which his long experience had been treated, took the keenest interest in the expedition, could not contain his disgust, and laid the failure of the campaign mainly to the 'want of expert men to advise what had been practised in fleets. For every man,' said he, 'that can manage a small bark is not capable to direct a fleet. You should not have relied on sailors put into the habit of gentlemen and made knights before they knew what belonged to gentility, nor were ever expert but in poor petty barks.'<sup>1</sup> With a staff so constituted it is

<sup>1</sup> *Tracts*, p. 273.

scarcely possible that any naval enterprise could have been successful, in spite of the magnificent chance that offered of destroying the flower of the new Spanish navy at a blow.

But worse was still to come. Before the expedition could sail, it was known that the peace with the Huguenots had been broken. The English ships were to be used to reduce Rochelle, and France had clearly intimated her intention of not risking war with Spain. If there had ever been any idea of acting in concert with the French in the Mediterranean, this put an end to it, and Buckingham was thrown back on the policy of a frontal attack by a great Protestant alliance. In September Dutch plenipotentiaries arrived at Plymouth to negotiate a fresh offensive and defensive treaty, and Buckingham, undeterred by his monstrous diplomatic failures, decided to throw up the command of the fleet and go over to the Hague to form a grand Protestant League. Thus the one man whose personal ascendancy and breezy confidence might have given the expedition some energy and cohesion was removed, and the command fell to Sir Edward Cecil, a mere infantry colonel of no exceptional ability and little if any experience of an independent command. All that could be done to supply his lack of influence and knowledge was to create him Viscount Wimbleton and surround him with a Council of War, which, besides the noblemen and the few sea captains already mentioned, consisted mainly of colonels like himself.

There is no doubt that, owing to the failure of the Tudor admirals to replace the tactical system they had destroyed with anything really definite and comprehensive, the influence of professional soldiers versed in the fundamental principles of the art of war was what the

navy most required. Under the great soldiers of the coming age, Cromwell, William III., and Marlborough, the navy, as we shall see, learnt much; but it was because they and the men of their choice went about their work in the right way, because they could distinguish technical detail from basic essentials, and knew where their own science began and that of the seamen ended. But with Cecil it was not so. Seeing only the chaos which the Elizabethans had left behind them, he tried with the best intentions in the world to force on the seamen a tactical system which was quite regardless of the limitations of their art. To dwell on its precise nature is needless. For our purpose we need only mark it, like so much else in Stuart times, as an effort to do the right thing in the wrong way. An official comment upon it fairly sums it up. 'It was observed,' the Report runs, 'that it intended to enjoin our fleet to advance and fight at sea much after the manner of an army at land, assigning every ship to a particular division, rank, file, and station, which order and regularity was not only improbable but almost impossible to be observed by so great a fleet in so uncertain a place as the sea.' Owing to the fact that no hostile fleet was met with, no attempt was made to put it in practice, and it survives for us only as a vivid glimpse of the condition of tactical opinion when, during the time of transition to the single line-ahead, it was hovering between squadronal lines and what we should now call a group-formation.<sup>1</sup>

It is from strategical and not from the tactical point of view that Lord Wimbledon's expedition retains its living interest. Here the soldiers were thoroughly at home, and in the domain that was really theirs they struck a note

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, vol. ii. 'Origin of the Line of Battle.'

which, though barely audible at first, had the true ring and is still sounding.

Cecil, it would appear, left the Channel with no very definite idea of what his objective was to be. On October 20, having reached the neighbourhood of St. Vincent, he thought well to call a council to settle what they were going to do. So soon as it had assembled he informed his officers that his general instructions were: first, to destroy the King of Spain's shipping; secondly, to possess some place of importance in his country; and, thirdly, as 'the principal point,' to intercept the arrival of the Plate fleet. The question therefore was what place they should seize. He further told them that at a council of war held before the King at Plymouth, San Lucar, the port of Seville, had been the objective most favoured, but the final decision had been left to them on the spot. Then it was that the debate arose in which, so far as is known, was made the first suggestion of an exploit destined eventually to lay the foundation of British power in the Mediterranean. A simple officer in an inglorious expedition, the man who made it has long been forgotten. His very name barely escaped oblivion, and his identity has survived by the merest accident. Yet surely he deserves a shrine in naval annals, and fortunately it is still possible to lift him from his obscurity, and to treasure every shred of his memory that can be recovered.

When we see what he was, it is to be again struck with how little the men of the English navy understood whither their destiny was to lead them. We see that destiny germinating, as it were, by its own vitality out of that obscure mutiny which sent Ward to teach the Barbary pirates the English art, and so forced the Duke of Osuna to try with a new sea power to dominate

the Mediterranean from Sicily and Naples. It will be remembered that when the great Spanish Viceroy was pressing Venice with his new fleet and Venice was crying to England for help, the focus of her war with the Hapsburgs was at Gradisca, which was closely besieged by a Venetian army. It was Ferdinand's frontier fortress which commanded the coast road round the head of the Adriatic, and so gave access into his ducal dominions about Trieste, where alone he touched the sea. On its fate therefore the war seemed to turn. In command of the sea, the Venetians were free to nourish their besieging army by an easy and rapid line of communication, and so long as this condition existed its fate was recognised to be only a matter of time. Every one saw that all depended on the dominion of the Adriatic. Hence Osuna's eagerness to control it, and Ferdinand's encouragement of the Illyrian pirates and the lavish expenditure of Venice in English and Dutch ports. Every one engaged in the defence of the place was feeling acutely the silent pressure of the sea, and among them was a certain Scottish soldier of fortune in the Austrian service, one Captain Henry Bruce.

Like most others of his type he had begun his career in the Low Country wars, and, after serving the Dutch with distinction, had passed on at the conclusion of the war into the service of the Emperor with the reputation of an accomplished officer with a strongly scientific turn of mind.<sup>1</sup> After the peace of Madrid put an end to the

<sup>1</sup> He was serving the Dutch as early as 1604, when he got into trouble by killing in a duel a certain Captain Hamilton, Captain-Lieutenant of Buccleuch's regiment. In 1608 he submitted to the States certain military inventions, which were accepted and for which he was well paid. On August 10, 1608, he received a very flattering recommendation from the Dutch Government to the Margrave of Anspach. See Ferguson's *Scots Brigade in Holland* (*Scottish Hist. Soc.*), vol. i.

Venetian war he continued to serve his ducal master, and when Ferdinand became Emperor he followed him to Vienna. There his services were rewarded with the governorship of Nikolburg on the Moravian frontier, where, at the outbreak of the Bohemian war, he allowed himself to be surprised and was obliged to capitulate. He now left the Emperor's service, as some said, in disgrace; but, according to his own story, he retired with his master's good leave because he could not consent to bear arms against his own king's son-in-law. On his way back to Scotland he reported himself at the Hague to the British Ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton. Carleton had his suspicions. The man, he wrote home, though of good place and reputation in the Emperor's wars, was a hot papist and perhaps a Jesuit agent. In any case he was a person of consideration, and it was worth while keeping an eye on him. This was in May 1620, when the war fever in England was running high and the drums were beating for the Prince Palatine's recruits under the Spanish Ambassador's window. In hope of a command, probably, Bruce proceeded direct to England. Whether or not he found employment at that time is uncertain, but in 1621 he is described as 'the servitor of the Prince his Highness'; and at any rate by 1625 he had so far established his reputation as to be given the command of the tenth or junior regiment in Buckingham's expeditionary force, which entitled him to a place in the Council of War, and won him a knighthood with the rest.<sup>1</sup>

It was this man who made the memorable proposal. The masters of the fleet had declared in council that San Lucar was impossible. It was a barred harbour, and they refused to be responsible for taking in the King's ships without pilots. The old game of an attack on Cadiz was

<sup>1</sup> *Carleton's Letters*, pp. 456, 460. Ferguson, *op. cit.*

then put forward, whereupon Sir Henry Bruce got up and boldly proposed Gibraltar. <The idea was entirely new and seems to have come upon the greater number of officers present as a surprise. But Bruce proceeded to point out how admirably the place fitted their strength and their objects. The road was a very strong one for the fleet to ride in, the shore afforded a good landing for troops, and, being small, the town could be easily garrisoned and victualled, and so permanently held if once taken. As for its advantages, though Gibraltar was poor compared with Cadiz or San Lucar, yet as a naval station it was unrivalled. The possession of it would place the whole Levant trade at their command and serve as a point of departure for future operations within the Straits. Far better, he urged, to look to the moral effect and future benefits than to be tempted by present pillage.>

The reception that Bruce's speech met with is a little doubtful. Afterwards, when Essex and nine of the other colonels formulated an indictment against Cecil for his mismanagement of the campaign, one of their principal charges was that he had not allowed Bruce's suggestion to be properly discussed. They accused him of having slighted both the proposal and its proposer by abruptly putting the question whether it was to be Cadiz or Gibraltar, adding that Gibraltar was Sir Henry Bruce's suggestion and that he seemed to stand alone. This Cecil characterised as a slander, saying that he had known Bruce longer in the wars than any other colonel, and that he was a gentleman he most particularly honoured. Yet the contradictory reasons which he gave for not having treated the proposal more seriously leave us with an impression that it was to his lack of understanding and dread of responsibility that the summary rejection of the idea was due. In one place he pleaded that Gibraltar was too

strong and not adapted to the objects of the expedition; in another that he did not know it was Bruce's proposal, but thought it came from the master of his ship; and in a third that he had no authority to go anywhere but to Cadiz or San Lucar. In short his whole defence is that of a man who knew he had made a grave mistake and thrown away the only chance he had had of a triumphant return.<sup>1</sup>

The opportunity that was missed is the more to be regretted since we know the place was in no condition to offer a serious resistance. In response to the changed situation a deep-water harbour had recently been made by the construction of what was so long famous as the 'New Mole'; so that it could now receive broadside ships as well as galleys; but the works were barely finished and little or nothing had been done to defend them. The Spaniards themselves were in grave apprehension for the place, and in the previous winter the King in person had visited it and ordered its fortifications to be modernised. The conversion was actually in progress, and it was owing to a similar state of things at Cadiz in 1596 that Essex had taken the town so easily. Gibraltar would certainly have been a still lighter task.<sup>2</sup>

Bruce's proposition being suppressed, the Council decided to attack St. Mary Port, in Cadiz Bay; but this proved as impracticable as San Lucar. It was then decided to land on the Cadiz island and seize Fort Puntal, which guarded the passage into the inner harbour. Here lay a portion of the fleet that had returned from Brazil,

<sup>1</sup> *The Voyage to Cadiz* (Camden Society), p. 33. *Two Original Journals of Sir Richard Grenville*, London, 1724, pp. 5, 33.

<sup>2</sup> Lopez de Ayala, *Hist. of Gibraltar* (Trans. James Bell), 130. See also the original report on the progress of the work at the end of 1626 by Luis Bravo, *Add. MSS.* 15152 and Aston's report, March 25, 1622, in his 'Letter Book,' *Add. MSS.* 36449.

and some other vessels, and these they proposed to capture or destroy. But so much time had already been wasted in councils that, long before an attack could be delivered, the Spanish ships had made themselves absolutely secure. The whole design was a poor imitation of what Howard and Essex had attempted in 1596. Every mistake they had then committed was repeated and exaggerated, there was no brilliant genius to repair errors, and in a week the fleet put to sea again, having suffered no little loss and accomplished nothing.

Still, they had gathered intelligence which might have directed them to repairing their fortunes. In Malaga, within the Straits, they learned there was lying the bulk of the Brazil fleet, stricken with disease, wholly unfit for sea and thoroughly demoralised. It was at the mercy of a bold attack, and some of the council of war were in favour of immediately undertaking its destruction. But Cecil could not bring himself to depart from his instructions or even to interpret them broadly. He felt bound to attempt the capture of the Plate fleet. To this end he decided to cruise off Cape St. Vincent, nor could the advocates of action in the Mediterranean wring any better comfort from him than a rendezvous near Malaga if they were forced from their station by westerly winds; otherwise the rendezvous was to be the Bayona Islands off Galicia. But no westerly gales came to blow them to fortune, and while they cruised fifty leagues to seaward on no definite system and without observation vessels, the Plate fleet slipped into Cadiz behind them unsighted.

Towards the end of November they were driven home in scattered groups, with no semblance of discipline or cohesion left, and Cecil had nothing to show for his pains but a swollen death roll, a shattered fleet no longer fit for sea, and for his reward the nickname of 'General

Sit-still.' On the ocean and the Spanish coast they had accomplished nothing, and in the Mediterranean the Marquis of Santa-Cruz had been left free to fly to the rescue of Genoa with a fleet of galleys. The French were forced to retire, and, along the Riviera, place after place was reoccupied by the Spanish admiral. In spite of the great effort that had been made, the Hapsburg position was stronger than ever. England had put forth her dreaded sea power and had failed. The link between Spain and Austria had renewed its strength. Charles's chance of breaking it had passed away, and the Thirty Years' War was left to run its appalling course with no interference from the British navy.

The truth is that England was still under the Elizabethan spell. It was not seen that the centre of power had passed from Spain to the Empire. Spain in English eyes was still the womb of all disturbance. Could she be brought low, all would be well. If war were to be made, it must be waged as Elizabeth had waged it—in the Atlantic and against Spanish trade. It was at this time that the full accounts of Drake's exploits were being published by his family, and it was with Drake's spirit, as Essex and Raleigh had transfigured it, that Buckingham was inspired.<sup>1</sup> No one could see that the heart of the situation had changed its place since his strategy had passed into legend, and that it was only in the Mediterranean that England would come within striking distance of the new vital points.

In 1626 an effort was made to get a new fleet to sea under Lord Willoughby, another professional soldier, but it was again directed against the Plate fleet, and started

<sup>1</sup> *Sir Francis Drake Reviv'd* was published in 1626, and dedicated by Sir Francis Drake, Bart., to Charles I. *The World Encompassed* he published in 1628, and dedicated it to Robert Earl of Warwick, afterwards Lord High Admiral.

so late in the year that it was driven back by gales in the Bay before ever it reached its station. In the following year Buckingham's wild diplomacy had driven us into war with France, and the navy was employed in disastrous efforts to assist the Huguenots at Rochelle. England was drifting further and further from the Mediterranean. Even when Venice, alarmed at the turn things were taking, decided to mediate between France and England and endeavour to stop the insane war, it was understood that, if peace came about, the British fleet was to be used in the Baltic to support the frontal attack from Scandinavia. It was on the eve of Buckingham's assassination, as he was about to lead in person a fresh attempt to relieve Rochelle, that Venice offered her mediation and nothing came of it. In the autumn Rochelle capitulated, and peace with France followed in the spring. But still no fleet went to the Baltic, though Gustavus Adolphus, about to launch on his meteoric career, was crying loudly for its help. In despair the King of Denmark made his peace with the Empire and withdrew from the Protestant alliance. In the following year came peace with Spain, patched up on the lines of that of 1604, which gave to England practically nothing of all she had fought for so long and arduously; and from that time she finally stood aside from the mighty struggle while Gustavus Adolphus did her work by hurling the Hapsburg back from the Baltic. From either of the two seas which gave her a pathway into the heart of Europe she might have deeply influenced the result; but Charles never understood the power he could have put forth. Again, in 1632, when Gustavus was at the zenith of his reputation, and there seemed nothing to stop his sweeping the Hapsburgs from the face of Europe, if only his rear were secured, he pleaded for the British fleet in the Baltic, and again,

in spite of wise counsel from his ministers, Charles stubbornly refused to listen. His whole naval policy was sinking further into reaction, and for the rest of his reign it was devoted, with the aid of the famous ship-money fleets, to enforcing his claim to the sovereignty of the Narrow Seas and to preventing their being disturbed by operations of the belligerents.

## CHAPTER XI

### MAZARIN AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

It was many a long day before England was again in a position to assert herself in the Mediterranean, and before her hour came the situation that had existed when she first entered the Straits had wholly changed. In the interval, during which the British navy was occupied in the great constitutional struggle between King and Parliament, a new sea power had arisen. France, with whom the epic contest was to be fought out, had definitely taken her place upon the waters of the Mediterranean.

In the last revolt of the Huguenots, Richelieu had seen his vast work of building up the modern French kingdom almost brought to ruin for want of a fleet, and it was in 1626, when he saw the English sea power about to be thrown into the rebels' scale, that he began to lay his foundations. It was in England he found his model. Up to this time the French navy had dragged on a moribund existence under its old mediæval organisation, and was still administered on almost feudal lines by four independent Admiralties. His first move was to sweep them away and centralise the whole organisation as it was centralised in England. He did in fact in one stroke what in England had been done in three main strides of development extending over a whole century. When Henry VIII. in his last years had created his central office of the navy, he had

left the service with much of its mediæval colouring by retaining the great office of Lord High Admiral unimpaired. Under Elizabeth, however, it had been largely modernised, not by any definite reform, but in the characteristic English way of unrecognised change that was found practically convenient. Lord Howard of Effingham remained to all appearance head of the navy, but the bulk of the work was done by Lord Burleigh and his chosen right hand, Sir John Hawkins, so that the Admiralty tended to become more and more an ordinary State department under the direct control of the chief minister of the Crown. By Cranfield's reform the work was practically completed. The last touch was given by Buckingham when he succeeded in getting for himself the office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports concurrently with that of Lord High Admiral. Thenceforward, like other departments, the navy was administered mainly by civilian public servants, while professional officers contented themselves with handling the material that was provided for them. All this Richelieu accomplished, or seemed to have accomplished, in one act, by abolishing the four Admiralties and substituting in their place a central State department, with himself at its head as Grand Master of Navigation. Immediately beneath him were two Secretaries of State, one for the West and one for the Levant—that is, one for the Ocean and one for the Mediterranean. These officers with two others formed a naval council, whose orders were executed in each of six maritime provinces by a civilian officer styled Lieutenant-General of the Grand Master. The fleet itself was organised in four squadrons—those of Normandy, Brittany, and Guierne for the Ocean, and that of Provence for the Mediterranean.

The system of allocation marks clearly the trend of

naval thought at the time. Every eye was turned to the great waters. The momentous revolution that was working itself out upon the ocean and Far Eastern seas absorbed attention. It was there the great struggle for dominion must be settled, and until some one of the oceanic powers had established some kind of preponderance, it was impossible for any of them to make itself felt with a mastering hand upon the Mediterranean. So far indeed did the old arena appear to have lost its importance, that for a time the Provençal or Mediterranean squadron remained what it had always been, and was represented practically by the Marseilles galleys and nothing more. It was not till France found herself drawn openly into the Thirty Years' War in a life and death struggle with the Hapsburg alliance, that the importance of the Mediterranean reasserted itself, and it was once more perceived to be what it always had been and always must be. In 1631 Richelieu entered into alliance with Gustavus Adolphus; in the two following years he was considering the project of a great ship canal from Marseilles to the ocean, and the famous naval port of Toulon was begun. His next step was to purchase from the young Duke of Retz, then only fifteen years old, the office of Captain-General of the Galleys, which carried with it the Lieutenantancy of the Levant, the one mediæval office that had survived his reforms of 1626. Thus his administrative revolution was completed, and the French navy could begin its career as an homogeneous entity.

But for all he could do, when war with the Hapsburgs was declared in 1635, he was powerless to take the offensive in the Mediterranean, and had to rely on coast defence, while Santa-Cruz threatened the shores of Provence and finally seized the Lerins islands.

Situated as they were, they formed a standing menace to the new naval base at Toulon, and the Spaniards were occupying them in force and rapidly throwing up fortifications of great strength, as though the occupation were intended to be permanent. Richelieu at once recognised the error in his naval strategy, and issued orders for practically the whole force of the oceanic squadrons to concentrate at Belle Isle and thence to enter the Mediterranean.

The fleet he was able to collect was a testimony to the success of his reforms. It consisted of some forty ships of war, including the great 'St. Louis' of 1,000 tons, and nine other vessels of 500 tons, the bulk of which belonged to Brittany, where Brest was fast assuming the place in the west that Toulon was to achieve in the south. There were, besides, fourteen transport and store ships and six fire-ships, which were beginning to be regarded as a necessary factor in every thoroughly equipped fleet, and were yearly growing in tactical importance. The effort practically exhausted the whole capacity of the oceanic squadrons, and, compared with the force England could display, the result was not very imposing. Yet it was a respectable force enough, and about Midsummer 1636 it passed the Straits without finding anything to oppose it, and effected a junction at Hyères with the galleys and a small sailing squadron from Toulon. But there for the time its energy ended. During the rest of the year the mutual jealousy of the various commanders prevented anything being done, and so low was the fleet reduced that it was actually in contemplation for half of it to return to the western ports to refit. At the same moment, however, the Spaniards prematurely reduced their garrison in the Lerins islands. The French seized

the occasion, attacked with their whole force, and by the middle of May 1637 the Lerins were once more in French hands. For the remainder of the year they were able to secure a working command of the sea and greatly assist military operations on the Spanish frontier. As winter came on, however, it was found impossible to keep the fleet at sea any longer, and the bulk of it had to be sent back to the western ports for an overhaul. Still, a contingent from each division remained to be dealt with in the Provençal ports, and thus was set on a permanent footing the famous Toulon squadron. In the spring of 1638 it consisted of eighteen ships of war, six of which were of 400 tons and upwards, and three fire-ships—a small beginning, it is true, but, taken with the formidable and increasing force that was being developed in the ocean ports, it was enough to give France a definite status as a first-rate sea power in the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup>

During the remainder of the war the Toulon squadron, supported from time to time by a division from the Atlantic, continued to have a marked influence on its progress. Its strategical value was mainly displayed in the security enjoyed by the shore of Provence and the coastwise traffic, and by the support it was able to give to the French offensive operations, both in Italy on the one side and Catalonia on the other. So convincing was Richelieu's naval policy that his death brought no interruption of the course upon which he had launched the new monarchy. He was succeeded as Grand Master by his nephew, the young Duc de Brézé, and the growing importance of the Mediterranean in French eyes was emphasised by his taking command of the Toulon fleet in

<sup>1</sup> For the French navy at this time see Jal, *Abraham du Quesne et la Marine de son temps*. Guérin (*Histoire Maritime*) is now regarded in France as untrustworthy. See De la Roncière, *Hist. de la Marine*, vol. i. Introduction.

person. Though this was a departure from Richelieu's idea of naval administration, it worked well. The youthful chief showed himself both capable and active, and his first campaign was the most vigorous that had yet been fought. Early in August 1643 he was able to put to sea with twenty-four ships of war, a squadron of galleys, and thirteen fire-ships, and he had ordered seven more ships to join him from the Atlantic. Running down the coast of Catalonia he captured, off Barcelona, five fine Spanish men-of-war, and added them subsequently to his fleet. Continuing his way, he ascertained off Cartagena that there was an armada in Cadiz preparing to oppose him, and he boldly held on to meet it. So serious was the disturbance of the Spaniards' plans, which the French action in the Mediterranean had produced, that they had been compelled to order the Dunkirk squadron, the flower of their navy, to enter the Straits. Off Cape Gata the two fleets met. All day they fought, and so much did the advantage lie with the young French admiral that he not only destroyed three of the finest of the Spanish vessels, but was able to continue his way towards Gibraltar to join hands with his Atlantic division. Still not content, he made a demonstration off Algiers to endeavour to effect an exchange of prisoners, and, after capturing a corsair or two, returned in triumph to Toulon. With pardonable pride he ordered a medal to be struck to commemorate the campaign, and it bore the legend, *Présage de l'empire de la mer*.

It was scarcely too much to boast, seeing what the command of the Mediterranean meant for France, and it would seem that Mazarin's cool head saw Brézé's campaign in scarcely less glittering colours than did the young commander himself. He began to perceive there were possibilities in the new weapon beyond anything

it had yet achieved. So long as his alliance with the Dutch remained firm he could trust to them the care of the ocean and the support of his army operating in the Spanish Netherlands, while, with the exception of a sufficient force for coast defence, he could concentrate practically the whole of the French naval strength in the Mediterranean. Mazarin is usually blamed for having neglected the navy, and having failed to maintain the vigorous growth Richelieu had inaugurated. But seeing the vast drain which the military exigencies of the situation were making upon the resources of the country, and the practical security which the Dutch alliance gave him in the Atlantic, the censure is probably unjust. Regarding his war policy from a purely strategical point of view, it would be a fairer judgment to praise him unreservedly for the bold and clear view which recognised the limited naval capacity of his country, and decided to concentrate the whole of it at the most vital point. That point he recognised in the western half of the Mediterranean. With the Spaniards in command of it, it was a path for invasion into Southern France. In French hands it was a gulf driven through the centre of the Hapsburg system and exposing it to incalculable attacks in every direction. On this principle Mazarin appears to have acted. Whether or not he fully appreciated what he was doing is a personal question that does not concern us. We have but to observe the fact and mark the result.

During the two years that followed the campaign of 1643 the Duc de Brézé with his able lieutenant, the Chevalier Paul, was occupied in supporting the invasion of Catalonia; but already Mazarin was contemplating for him a more telling stroke. For some time past his far-seeing eye had been fixed upon the old centres of Mediterranean power, and both in Naples and Sicily

he had been busily fomenting the discontent which the maladministration of the Spaniards engendered. All that the possession of the Two Sicilies meant for his enemy was clear to him, and he was bent on wresting them from her grasp. 'It is no less a matter,' he wrote, in telling his agent to spare no expense, 'than the loss of two kingdoms, which would be the death-blow to Spain.' His accurate measurement of the power at his disposal did not permit him to think of a direct conquest. The end was to be gained in another way by the hand of Prince Thomas of Savoy. As a first step a military expedition under his command, supported by Brézé's fleet, was directed against the ports which the Spaniards held in the south of Tuscany, in order to secure for France a fresh opening into the Spanish Italian possessions, and at the same time to warn the Pope of the danger of leaning too markedly to Spain. This done, if affairs in Naples were ripe for the reception of a liberator, the Prince was to be established there as king of an independent state, on condition that he would cede to France the port of Gaeta on the southern frontier of the Papal territory, and another in the Adriatic. It was further stipulated that, should he or his heirs ever succeed to the throne of Savoy, he was to cede to France so much of his territory as lay to the west of the Alps—that is to say, the province of Nice. Thus Mazarin, anticipating history by two centuries, sought to complete the Mediterranean coast-line of France, while at the same time he held the Pope gripped between two naval ports, secured a new point from which to strike at the Hapsburg's communications, established himself in the heart of the Mediterranean, and saw the key of it in the hands of a prince who must be dependent upon his master.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres du Cardinal Mazarin (Documents Inédits)*, ii. 304.

It was a conception worthy of a great minister, and the Duc de Brézé was a commander well suited to his hand. In May 1646 he sailed from Toulon at the head of a fleet of twenty-six ships, twenty galleys, and eighteen fire-ships, together with a number of transports carrying six thousand troops under Prince Thomas of Savoy. Without difficulty they were suddenly thrown ashore in Tuscany, and, having established himself there, the Prince, with the assistance of Brézé's fleet, laid siege to Orbitello, the most important of the Spanish ports. To take the place by assault was impossible, and before the siege was four days old the Spanish fleet, which had rendezvoused at Naples, appeared to relieve it. The two fleets were fairly equal, except that the Spaniards were considerably stronger in galleys. In the action that ensued both sides claimed the victory, but in effect it was the Spaniards who reaped all the advantage. The Duc de Brézé, still only in his thirtieth year, was killed by a round shot, and his vice-admiral decided to take the fleet back into port to repair damages. It is true the Spaniards did the same, but their object was accomplished. The Prince of Savoy found it impossible to continue the siege, and, so far from being able to proceed, crowned with victory, to Naples, it was only with the greatest difficulty he effected his retreat to Turin.

Mazarin's first offensive stroke was parried, but his purpose held firm. The failure of the campaign had but served to emphasise the importance of the navy, and all the most exalted and ambitious spirits in France were eager to secure its command. The great Condé himself, who, since his late victory at Rocroy, was adored as the national hero, was the most pressing claimant to the vacant office of Grand Master, and Mazarin saw the very keenness of the new weapon threatening his policy with

failure. Other great nobles were as covetous of the place as Condé, but Mazarin at all costs was resolved to hold true to his master's idea. The navy was far too powerful a factor in the new kingdom to be allowed to pass out of the control of the central Government. Henceforth it must lie in his own hands, as it had been in Richelieu's, and with one of his masterly strokes he baffled all the claimants by getting the Queen Regent herself to accept the exalted post. So Anne of Austria became Grand Master of Navigation, and whatever was the Queen Regent's was Mazarin's. Unshaken by the late failure, the first use he made of his new power was to order a division of the Toulon fleet to sea with fresh troops, and before the autumn was out he was in possession of Piombino, another Tuscan port which the Spaniards occupied to the north of Orbitello, and firmly established in Porto Longone in the adjacent Isle of Elba. Thus his position was completely recovered. In Piombino he had a gateway into Tuscany; and in Elba, immediately opposite to it, an advanced naval base, which gave him a still greater advantage than that which the Spaniards enjoyed in Corsica and Sardinia. Nor did he sleep on his advantage or for one moment turn his eye from the great project he had conceived. In the following year the bulk of the Toulon fleet was occupied in supporting Condé, who had been induced to accept the command in Catalonia; but a division of it was sent, under the Chevalier Paul, to Piombino and Elba to keep an eye on Naples. There at last Mazarin's machinations were bearing visible fruit. A revolution had broken out, and the famous Masaniello, at the head of a popular outbreak, had proclaimed a republic. The news caused a profound sensation in Europe. The principal cities of Sicily had responded to the revolutionary movement, and men saw a possibility of the Two

Sicilies becoming for Spain another Holland. All that seemed to be required was a leader of dignity and experience, and the same kind of support from outside with which England under Elizabeth had enabled the Dutch to gain their feet.

Still Mazarin held his hand. Prince Thomas received no call and the fleet remained at Elba. The fact was Mazarin had learned the great lesson. The late campaign had taught him that nothing really effective could be achieved without first gaining a real command of the sea. He was therefore resolved not to risk another step until he had concentrated every available ship in the Mediterranean. His success on the Tuscan coast had decided the Grand Duke to secretly throw in his lot with France, and he had sold all his galleys to Louis in the name of the Prince of Monaco. The new King of Portugal too had been engaged to send a squadron of his best ships to Toulon, and Du Quesne was on his way to enter the Straits with a squadron he had raised in Sweden. Mazarin knew besides that a premature intervention might nip the Neapolitan revolution in the bud, and to his agents' urgent calls from Italy he replied that they must not try to eat the fruit until it was ripe. With these considerations he also sought to quiet Prince Thomas's impatience; for the truth was he meant to throw him over. His great scheme had taken a further development. Condé was the greatest leader in Europe; Condé was the great stumblingblock to Mazarin's internal policy; and the astute minister saw that, if Condé could only be induced to accept the enterprise of the Two Sicilies, he would achieve a double stroke of incalculable advantage to his country. Not only would the chief disturbing factor be removed from France, but, with a prince of the blood at the head of a new Mediterranean state, the Two

Sicilies would become for France all that the Catholic Netherlands had been for Spain.

So full of brilliant promise was Mazarin's idea that it is difficult not to pause a moment and wonder how the course of European policy might have been changed could Condé have been induced to spend his ambition and unrivalled genius in building up at Naples or Palermo a naval state in sympathy with France. But it was not to be. Condé apparently could only see in the proposal a crafty design to ruin him, and he refused. So Mazarin was forced back on Prince Thomas and his policy of waiting till the fruit was ripe. Still hoping Condé might change his mind, he resolved to let things stay as they were till he could no longer hold back. But, just when all was settled, his hand was forced by a wholly unlooked-for incident.

In Rome was the young Duke of Guise, trying to get a divorce, and longing to drown his private cares in any wild sea of public adventure. No more romantic or fascinating figure gilds the annals of his time. In person, character, and temper, Heaven seemed to have designed him for a popular hero. The blood of the old Angevins who had once ruled in the Sicilies tingled in his veins and fired him to seek in the stormy outburst at Naples a way to his highest aspirations. More astute even than Mazarin, he industriously fomented republican opinions in Naples till one day he received from the popular leaders an invitation to come and be to them what the princes of the House of Orange had been to the Dutch. He asked Louis's consent to accept, and Mazarin hardly knew what to answer. There was still time to consider, however, and Mazarin felt he might safely risk a vague consent. He was sure at any rate that for the present Guise could not act upon it; for the Spanish fleet held the sea, and the land

route to Naples was impossible. But suddenly came the news that the daring young prince had gone aboard a felucca almost alone, and, passing through the centre of the blockading Spanish force, had landed at Naples. A feather-headed young gallant, no matter how brilliant his personality, was the last instrument Mazarin would have chosen to work his Mediterranean policy. But he had to act. The Toulon squadron had retired into port for the winter. Nevertheless, so much of it as could get to sea was immediately ordered out, and after serious delay from the wintry weather it appeared off Naples. But there was now no Duc de Brézé to give it life. The Duc de Richelieu was in command, and though he had under him such officers as the Chevalier Paul and Abraham Du Quesne, he practically did nothing. After blockading the enemy's fleet under the guns of the batteries that were still in Spanish hands for two months, and fighting a half-hearted action, he returned in disorder to Toulon.

The enterprise of Naples had failed a second time, but Guise was still there, and Mazarin was too firmly set on his great idea not to persist. He kept repeating to all concerned that the loss of Naples meant the death-blow to Spain, and stirred every nerve to prepare a still stronger expedition for the spring of 1648. But long before it could sail came the news that Guise's reckless behaviour had succeeded in disgusting the Neapolitans. The Spaniards had been treacherously readmitted and the Duke was a prisoner. The event was not entirely unwelcome. Neither Louis nor Mazarin had ever approved Guise's adventures, and now falling back on the original idea they offered the command of the new expedition they were preparing to Prince Thomas. He accepted, but it was not till August that he was able to get to sea. The force at his command was the most powerful France

had yet developed upon the Mediterranean. It consisted of some seventy sail of warships and transports, and Mazarin had reason to hope that its appearance in the Bay of Naples would be the signal for a new revolution, or at least that it would be able to seize one of the Neapolitan islands and establish there a base for further operations. In both expectations he was disappointed. So strongly had the Spaniards re-established themselves, and so ill were the operations conducted, that it was found impossible to accomplish anything.

Mazarin's far-sighted design had finally failed, but it had left its mark. So near had it been to success, so dangerously had the balance of Mediterranean power been swaying for a change, that a new condition had been definitely introduced into European politics. The sailing of that formidable fleet from Toulon marks the definite appearance of France as a Mediterranean power, and the abortive attempt on the Two Sicilies was to be remembered less as a failure than as an indication of the possibilities that lay open to the new sea power. Though for a time the outbreak of Condé paralysed the action of France with civil war, every one felt the attempt was likely to be renewed so soon as she was herself again, and nowhere was the new situation more keenly watched than in England.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE NEW NAVY

At the moment when the preoccupation of civil strife brought to a halt the development of the French navy, that of England was set free, and she found herself at liberty to reappear in the Mediterranean just when France was forced to abandon her attempt to dominate it. It was a memorable hour, big with transition. There are few points in European history where a period is so strongly marked as at this halting place—midway in the seventeenth century. As we listen to the great pæan there comes a pause in its throb, and when the sound flows on again it is in a rhythm entirely changed. In the history of the British navy it is no less marked than in that of European polity. When England awoke to take her place once more among the powers, it was to face a new situation with a new weapon and a new method of wielding it.

The situation must be clearly apprehended. The main reason which had made Mazarin so eager to deal Spain a death-blow in the Mediterranean was that, in January 1648, she had induced his Dutch allies to make a separate peace with her, and thus the struggle between Spaniards and Dutch which had lasted eighty years was brought definitely to an end. Mazarin's idea had been to force Spain into a peace with France by creating in the Mediterranean a situation which she dared not face. In this, as we have seen, he failed; but before the year was

out he had come to terms with the Empire and thus broken up the Hapsburg alliance. At the same time the Empire too made peace with Sweden, and the Thirty Years' War was at an end. Spain and France were left facing each other single-handed, each crippled by inherent troubles, but fairly matched and neutralising one another on the European board. The other prime factors in the situation were that the United Provinces were starting finally on their brief career as one of the great powers; Portugal was again an independent kingdom; and, lastly, there had arisen on the ruins of the decrepit Stuart monarchy a military state whose power of disturbance it was impossible to calculate.

It was a phenomenon unknown to modern Europe, and no one could tell how to deal with it. Diplomacy was in those days almost entirely a matter of dynastic connections, and here was a state without a dynasty. The extraordinary military ability it had developed made it a desirable ally, but in every Court of Europe it was regarded with repulsion, which the execution of the King increased to loathing. It was natural then that the only method of handling the situation that suggested itself to the old monarchies was to keep well with the exiled dynasty till an opportunity arose for restoring it and so securing its alliance. Till that time came the new Republic could be ignored as a pariah among nations. For, powerful as was its military strength, its navy as yet had made no appearance, and there was no indication that it could stretch its arm beyond the sea.

The position indeed in which the Commonwealth found itself at the outset of its career upon the sea was almost ignominious, and gave no sign of the impressive future that lay before it. It was not that the navy had been neglected. From the King the Parliamentary

Government had inherited a force that was not below the traditional standard. No one can deny to Charles his devotion to the navy. It was the immediate cause of his ruin and the outcome of it one of the mainstays of his opponents. So soon as Richelieu's energy began to threaten a serious rivalry upon the seas, a new era of naval activity had set in and the English dockyards were busy, as they were to be so often again, in a building match with the French. In 1631 Charles had procured a detailed return of Richelieu's navy, showing some forty vessels ranging from 200 to 900 tons, more than half of them being 34 to 40-gun ships of 400 to 500 tons. Such a navy, at least on paper, was a serious rival, and in the next three years the English dockyards turned out four vessels of about 800 tons and two of 500, so that in the ensuing year the 'ship money' fleets could ride the Narrow Seas in undisputed mastery.

But the contest did not end here. The French had laid down a vessel of 1400 tons, and Charles called for designs for a three-decker of 1500. Such a ship had never been heard of. It was some years under consideration, but in spite of the protests of the experts that a warship with three gun decks was 'beyond the art or wit of man to construct,' the King persisted. In January 1636 the keel was laid, and in October 1638 was launched the famous 'Sovereign of the Seas' of 102 guns, the pride and glory of the Caroline navy, and the first three-decker ever built. Yet the French were not altogether beaten. In the same year they were able to commission the 'Couronne' of 2000 tons; but, though she was 28 ft. longer than the 'Sovereign,' she was not a three-decker and only carried 72 guns. Still Charles was not satisfied. He began at once to contemplate another 'Sovereign,' but before her keel could be laid his troubles were upon him and she was still-born.

It is not only in this early contest with France that the interest of the Caroline programme lies. It was an age of invention and experiment: the new scientific spirit was astir, and naval architecture, like everything else, felt its quickening. Engines for moving ships against wind and tide were constantly being designed, paddle vessels were regularly employed for towing the navy ships in and out of the Medway, and even submarines were not beyond the daring of inventors.<sup>1</sup> Such aspirations were of course premature; but a distinct advance in naval architecture did take place, and its most prominent result was the appearance of the modern 'frigate.' In 1627, during the height of his war with France and Spain, Charles had sought to supply his lack of cruisers by building ten 'whelps' of about 200 tons. They were still on Elizabethan lines, designed like the larger pinnaces to use oars, but were otherwise small replicas of 'great ships.' In 1640 Richelieu replied with ten 'dragonés,' apparently on the same lines. So far there seems little sign of change in the typical cruiser, from either England or France. The truth is that neither country can claim the credit of the 'frigate.' It was in the piratical port of Dunkirk, where constructors were freed from Government control, that the real step was taken. We have seen how the place had been earning itself the reputation of the smartest dockyard in Europe, and turning out privateers which no one could touch. In the year 1635, when the Conde de Fuentes took over the command of the Spanish squadron of Dunkirk, he found in it a division of twelve 'fregatas' which Spaniards regarded as a wholly new type and claim as the model that all nations followed. The ocean powers had all of course long ago left behind the original

<sup>1</sup> An interesting account of these inventions is among Lord Dartmouth's MSS.

Mediterranean form of 'frigate,' which was only a small and modified galley, and were applying the word to small fast-sailing vessels such as the *gallizabras*, which carried the Spanish treasure trade. But the Dunkirk ships were a still further advance. For the most part they were vessels of from 200 to 300 tons, with 20 to 30 guns, and their marked characteristic was that they had no poop or fore-castle of any kind, but an upper deck that ran flush from stem to stern, a modification which was found to give them extraordinary speed and handiness.<sup>1</sup>

During the year 1635 the Dunkirkers, with their hand against every man's, made a remarkable number of prizes; but in 1636 two of them, the 'Swan' and the 'Nicodemus,' were captured by the 'ship money' fleet under Northumberland, and were added to the navy as the fastest vessels afloat. Sir John Penington, his vice-admiral and one of the most experienced officers in the service, was so much struck with them that he advised the 'Swan' being taken as a model in the English dockyards, and the 'Nicodemus' was said to run away from everything 'as a greyhound does from a little dog.' The dimensions of the 'Swan' are unknown, for before Penington's advice could be acted on she was wrecked off Guernsey; but the 'Nicodemus' we know to have been of 105 tons with a length of nearly  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times her beam. This was a distinct advance on the old galleon proportion, on which Charles's construction had been going in all his latest ships, and it may be that this increased length was a further characteristic of the new Dunkirk frigates, and that this is the real explanation of the same characteristic appearing in the first frigates of the Long Parliament.

The point is difficult to determine, for, owing to the troubles that supervened, the English dockyards, so far as

<sup>1</sup> Duro *Armada Española*, iv. 407.

new work was concerned, were silent for nearly ten years. Though the navy had not particularly distinguished itself during the first civil war, it had remained staunch to its paymasters and had sufficed to give the Parliament the command of the sea against the King. It was not till the last great effort was being made to bring the protracted strife to a conclusion that any serious measures were taken to increase the naval energy of the Parliament.

It is in the year 1645 that we may place the conception of the true modern navy—the year that by a strange chance was the centenary of the fleet which marked the culmination of the naval reforms of Henry VIII., and which finally established the English domination of the Narrow Seas. The movement out of which the change came was the same that produced the New Model army, so that in that year we see our modern army and our modern navy lying as it were side by side in one cradle. By virtue of the Self-Denying Ordinance both services passed together out of the hands of the politicians to be refashioned by professional men. The Earl of Warwick resigned his office of Lord High Admiral, and its duties were vested in a commission of six peers and twelve commoners. The influence of the experts was at once visible in a programme embodying the ideas which had been in the air for the past ten years. During 1646 and 1647, the first years of the new administration, at least nine vessels of the new long frigate type were launched. They varied from a little over 200 tons up to nearly 500, and carried from 26 to 38 guns. Most famous of them all was the 'Constant Warwick,' built in 1646 as a privateer by a syndicate in which Warwick was the chief partner. From her birth she was regularly chartered by the Parliament, and finally purchased into the navy in 1649.

Pepys believed her to have been the first true frigate

ever laid down in an English dockyard, and to have been copied from a French vessel that had been lying in the Thames. This may have been the fact, but she can hardly claim to be the first of her class, since in the same year she was built the Government launched four others of their own which were on lines even more advanced than the 'Warwick.' Even therefore if she was actually copied from a French ship, the others were not, and the oft-repeated assertion that we owed the type to France cannot be supported. The fact probably is that both nations learnt in the same school—the school of Dunkirk, which at that time, if it was anything, was Spanish, although it did actually surrender to the French in this very year, 1646.

So far then all was going well with the navy of the Parliament. The men, better paid and treated than they had ever been before, and commanded by seamen after their own heart, responded with ungrudging obedience, and it was not till the triumph of the constitutional party split it into two factions that the trouble began. So little interest had the sailors displayed in the merits of the struggle, that a revolt was hardly to be looked for, and indeed it may be doubted whether any would have occurred, had it not been for the lines on which the split declared itself. The question of the future settlement of the Government rapidly resolved itself into a quarrel between the older constitutionalists and the new military party. The jealousy which to some extent is inevitable between the two services naturally inclined the sailors to be restless under the threatened domination of military officers, especially as it seemed to them to involve a return to the detested landsmen officers of Charles's time. The anxiety of the military party to secure the fleet brought about the crisis. In October 1647 Captain William

Batten, a popular seaman who had been appointed Vice-Admiral of England and Commander-in-Chief when Warwick had been obliged to resign, was summoned somewhat peremptorily to explain certain matters to the Government, and, being uneasy at the turn things were taking, seized the opportunity to tender his resignation. It was accepted with alacrity, and an active member of the Navy Board, Colonel Thomas Rainsborough, appointed Commander-in-Chief in his place. He was a typical man of the New Model, a strong Independent, and apparently filled with an overweening sense of what was due to the men of the army that had delivered the country. To the sailors he was detestable, for, although he had formerly commanded afloat, he was essentially the soldier. For six months they endured what they called his 'insufferable pride, ignorance, and insolency,' and then they mutinied and refused to allow him aboard his ship. The other vessels of the fleet followed the example of the flagship and similarly got rid of their objectionable officers.

May 1648, when the mutiny occurred, was one of the darkest hours for the revolution. The second civil war was breaking out. The Scots were preparing to cross the border to the King's rescue, and Royalist risings had taken place in Wales, the Eastern Counties, and Kent. The Presbyterians in London could barely be controlled; there was every sign of the insurrection spreading to Surrey and Essex; the Kentish Royalists were threatening the capital from Rochester and Deptford; and under the guns of the revolted ships the castles of Deal, Sandown, and Walmer were forced to surrender, and Dover was besieged. There was not a moment to lose. The seamen demanded that Warwick should come back to command them, and the Government had no choice but to reappoint him Lord High Admiral and send him off at once. He was so far

successful that of the twenty-seven vessels that composed the fleet in the Downs he was able to secure eighteen; but the other nine, including the 'Constant Reformation' and one of the new frigates, declared openly for the King and stood over to Goree in Holland.

Thither the Prince of Wales hastened to meet them, and so large was the demand which the new civil war made upon the Parliamentary fleet that he found himself actually in superior force to anything that could be brought to meet him. The way was open for a sudden descent on the capital or the revolted counties, and in July he stood over to the English coast. There, to make matters worse, Batten, who managed to escape from custody in London, joined him in the 'Constant Warwick.' The Prince had now eleven vessels and the most popular and experienced officers in the service at his command, and Warwick had not yet succeeded in weeding his fleet of sedition. For a month the Prince was able to blockade the Thames, intercepting a number of valuable homeward-bound vessels, and to keep himself interposed between the Chatham and Portsmouth divisions of the Parliamentary fleet. It was a most promising situation in view of the unrest of the Presbyterian City and the Scottish invasion. Unfortunately the Prince had insisted on commanding the fleet himself, and neither he nor his Presbyterian vice-admiral, Lord Willoughby of Parham, knew anything of their business; and as for Batten, who had been knighted and made rear-admiral, he was too uneasy in his conscience to be capable of vigorous action. Thus nothing was made of the opportunity. Every attempt to assist the movement in the home counties failed ignominiously. For fear of offending the City, the prizes were given up for next to nothing, and neither division of the Parliamentary fleet was brought to action.

Then came Cromwell's crushing defeat of the Scots at Preston to shatter all the hopes on which the Prince's action was based; and though the seamen forced him to make one desperate attempt to bring Warwick to action in the Thames, it failed, and the revolted ships had to return to Helvoetsluys, where Warwick blockaded them till the advancing season compelled him to withdraw.

Thus the naval position of the Commonwealth at the outset of its career was by no means imposing. It had displayed an inability to use the force at its command with vigour and promptitude, and the Prince of Wales had the nucleus of a fleet, officered by some of the best men in the service, to increase the demands that the maritime force of the Parliament had proved inadequate to meet. Save for the evil star of the Stuarts the situation might have been still worse, but, as usual, they played into their enemies' hands. Already mutinous for want of pay, and mistrustful of their Presbyterian officers, the sailors were disgusted with the intrigues of the Prince's followers for the command. They themselves, uneasy at having been carried back to a foreign port, and clinging fanatically to the idea that they had not deserted their country, clamoured for the Duke of York, their legitimate Lord High Admiral, and at such a moment to place over them a foreigner was the most ill-advised step that could be taken. Yet this was what was done. Prince Rupert and his brother Maurice, who, though they had been at sea with the Prince of Wales, had made no progress in the seamen's affection, were nominated admiral and vice-admiral. The result was that Batten, Jordan (afterwards the famous admiral of the Dutch war), and two or three other captains withdrew from the service, the sailors deserted wholesale, and, the 'Constant Warwick' having

already set the example, several of the other ships returned to England and surrendered.

Still the position was awkward enough. The Royalists retained the nucleus of a fleet, around which privateers of all nations would be willing enough to gather in order to prey on English commerce. The Queen of Bohemia pawned her jewels to assist her adventurous sons, and they justified their appointment by such a display of energy that in January 1649, a fortnight before the King's execution, they were able to put to sea with eight vessels, and under the wing of three Dutch East Indiamen to pass down the Channel defying the winter guard to stop them.

Hitherto the civil war had been confined to the land; but now, with Scotland and Ireland on their hands, and every foreign nation in a condition of barely concealed hostility, the revolutionary Government saw it spreading to the sea. But for the new men danger was only a spur to effort. Energy, thoroughness, and a practical and scientific directness of method were their note, and the King was barely in his grave before they set on foot those far-reaching measures, that finally transformed the navy to its modern shape, and established England as the great naval power of the world.

The promptitude with which they acted reveals the importance they attached to their maritime position, and the boldness and sagacity with which they grasped the task that lay before them. It was on January 30, 1649, that the King's head fell. On February 2 they voted that no fewer than thirty armed merchantmen should be added to the fleet; ten days later they placed the office of naval Commander-in-Chief in the hands of a commission consisting of three of their most trusted colonels; ten days later, again, Warwick's appointment

as Lord High Admiral was terminated, and the powers and duties of the office vested in the Council of State; and even before they had formally abolished the kingly office they had passed two ordinances for the encouragement of seamen and increasing the attractions of the naval service. The main feature of these measures was a large increase and clear definition of the share of prize money which they intended to allow, and in view of the policy they were contemplating and the recent exhibition of the seamen's opinion some substantial gratification was imperative. For the navy was about to be brought definitely under the military domination, which had been threatening and exasperating it ever since the fall of Howard, and herein lies the absorbing interest of the new administration.

In a sense the reform was a reaction—a reaction to the system which Drake and his school had broken down—a reaction to the ideas of the Mediterranean which regarded the naval and military arts as one. In the south the two arts were but two branches of the great art of war, governed by the same essential principles and to be worked out on the same essential lines. It was this influence which, stiffened into pedantry, had choked the development of naval science till the Elizabethans delivered it. But great advance as was the reform of Wynter, Hawkins, and Drake, it must not be forgotten that it was mainly destructive. They broke down the old tradition, but created little to take its place. True, there are signs that Drake saw dimly the disease which his work was likely to engender, and in the year after the Armada he experimented for a remedy; but time and opportunity were wanting for fruition. In Buckingham's time, as we have seen, an attempt was made to restore the good that had perished with the evil, but it was attempted

on vicious lines and the remedy proved worse than the disease. Then the Long Parliament went back frankly to the ideas of the Elizabethan seamen, and they too missed success—even came close to disaster. It is but natural then that the new military government should see in that lack of success a lesson that was perfectly clear to their eyes. It was the military element that was wanting—not as Buckingham understood it—not the chivalry and the feathers, but the element of the professional soldier with his matter-of-fact appreciation of the fundamental principles of his art. It was this element to which the Parliament had surrendered itself in its most hopeless hour, and it had given them the New Model army. Now that the New Model was in power it was inevitable that it should see salvation for the navy in the same element by which it had triumphed.

Nowhere exists any definite enunciation of these views. The work shows itself to us as an assertion of that instinct for administration which is the remarkable feature of the Commonwealth, and we have to gather it from what was done and not from what was said. In what was done the trend of thought is unmistakable. We see it clearly in the choice of their three 'Generals at Sea,' as they came to be called. Colonel Edward Popham, it is true, had served afloat, but it was many years back, when he was quite a young man, and he was now forty. In the ship-money fleet of 1636 he had been lieutenant in the 'Henrietta Maria,' and the following year commanded the 'Fifth Whelp' and lost her. It was no fault of his, and he again had a ship in 1639. But the fact that a man commanded afloat in those days of landmen captains is no proof that he was a sailor, and certainly at the outbreak of the civil war Popham served ashore, raising men for the Parliament and

receiving the rank of colonel almost from the outset. In any case the sailors' view of him admits of no dispute; for he was one of the three colonels whose presence as captains in the fleet had led to the recent mutiny, and his ship, the 'Swallow,' like Rainsborough's own, had remained with the Prince of Wales and was now with Rupert. Again, in the case of Colonel Richard Deane, although, being the nephew of a city merchant, he is said to have made trading voyages as a young man, throughout the civil wars he had served as a soldier, and had acquired the highest reputation as an artillery officer. At Preston too he had shown real tactical ability when in command of the right wing of Cromwell's victorious army.

The third case is the most remarkable of all, and it brings us to the name which was to the navy of the seventeenth century what Drake's had been to that of the sixteenth, and with which the reappearance of England in the Mediterranean is indissolubly associated. It is Robert Blake that tradition has always acclaimed as the master spirit of the Cromwellian navy, and modern research has only confirmed his place. Many achievements with which he was credited have, it is true, been found to be exaggerated, and some even without foundation. But this only serves to reveal how profound was the impression of his work. Legends grew up about his name as they grew up about Drake's; but, shatter them as we will, they still serve the more strongly to reveal to us how great was the place each held for the men of his age. Though Blake was no professional soldier like Skippon and Leslie and Monk, there was nothing in his career to make him a seaman, except possibly, as in Deane's case, a few trading voyages in his youth. Till the age of twenty-six he had been a scholar at Oxford, and then, having failed to obtain a fellowship,

he returned to Bridgewater, his native town, where his family were merchants. For five or six years 'in his youth' he lived at Schiedam in Holland, and while there seems to have become acquainted with Tromp. It may well have been that he went there as agent for the family business.<sup>1</sup> At the outbreak of the war he appears to have attached himself to Popham, and when Bristol surrendered to Rupert in 1643 he was already lieutenant-colonel of Popham's regiment. Here it was he first became prominent by refusing for twenty-four hours to give up the outwork he commanded, vowing it was not included in the capitulation, and that he could still hold it. The following year he was the moving spirit of the defence of Lyme in Dorsetshire, when for a month, with a garrison of five hundred men, it held out against all Prince Maurice's army till the place was relieved, and so frustrated the Royalist strategy in the west. Then he held Taunton, a barely defensible place, for a whole year, and again paralysed the Royalist action in Devon and Cornwall. In the second civil war his name appears in no prominent position, and he was mentioned in cavalier circles as a man who had not received his due reward, and therefore was worth watching. The reason of his sudden elevation to the head of the navy is still a mystery, unless during the recent time of acute anxiety he had done something, of which nothing is known, to prevent a Royalist outbreak in the west. The credit of his selection is probably due to the man who first recognised his talents. Popham, by reason of his previous experience, was, of all the men whom the new Government could trust, the one most confidently looked to in naval affairs, and his request to have his old lieu-

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *Dutch War*, pp. 217, 402.

tenant-colonel for a colleague would probably have been enough to secure Blake's appointment.

Still, no one was more surprised at his sudden elevation than Blake himself, and one man at least thought his talents were thrown away at sea. Barely six months after he had entered on his new duties, and while he was actually blockading Rupert on the Munster coast, Cromwell, who had just landed in Ireland and was face to face with the enormous difficulties of his task, applied for him to be his major-general.<sup>1</sup> No higher compliment could have been paid to his soldiership. It was an office which, as corresponding to a modern chief of the staff, was usually reserved for professional soldiers of the ripest experience. But Blake was already wedded to his new career, and in his bulldog way had no mind to loosen his teeth on the prey he was watching. So soon as he heard of it he wrote off to Popham begging him to get the application withdrawn. 'It was a strange surprise,' he said, 'greater even than that of my present employment, which, although it was extremely beyond my expectations as well as merits, I was soon able to resolve upon by your counsel and friendship.' He even intimated that, anxious as he was to serve the Parliament, he would retire into private life rather than submit to be taken from the sea. 'I desire,' he concluded, 'to serve the Parliament in anything I can, so I shall account it an especial happiness to be able to serve them in that conjunction [in] which they have already placed me. If they please otherwise to resolve I shall be content with a great deal more cheerfulness to lay down the command than I took it up, and in private to contribute the

<sup>1</sup> Cromwell landed August 15. The application was known to Deane in Dublin on August 23. See Deane to Popham, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) p. 34.

devoutest performances of my soul for their honour and prosperity.'<sup>1</sup> After this letter no more was heard of Cromwell's application. The place was given to Ireton, and the three colonels remained to bend the navy in shape with their own ideas.

It must not of course be concluded that the installation of these men was not mainly for a political end. The desire to secure the navy undoubtedly came before the intention of reforming it. But the one was so inevitably the outcome of the other that the Government of the Commonwealth must be taken to have intended what the new appointments achieved. Their primary intention was to see the navy in hands they could trust; but it is no less certain that they intended that these same hands should infuse into the sea service the same spirit and the same science which had secured them the devotion and the triumphs of the army. Time and reflection only deepened the lines they had begun to trace. In March the following year the Council of State delegated their Admiralty work to a committee of seven of their number. Continuity was secured in the presidency of Sir Henry Vane, who had been the Parliamentary Treasurer of the Navy; but of the other six members four, including Popham, were colonels, and thus the soldiers were in a majority. At the same time, while the seamen were conciliated by an increase of pay, more military officers were given ships for the summer fleet.

In the following month we get a further insight into the feeling that prevailed, in the announcement that 'on April 9 the Lord General (Fairfax), Lord President (Bradshaw), and Mr. Speaker, with many members of Parliament and officers of the army, went to Deptford to

<sup>1</sup> Col. Robert Blake to Col. Edward Popham, September 16, 1649. *Leybourne-Popham MSS. (Hist. MSS. Com.)* . 33.

see the launching of the two frigates.' These were the latest vessels of the new type, the one of 60 guns named the 'Fairfax,' and the other of 42 called the 'President.' A third frigate of 64 guns was launched the same year and named the 'Speaker.' Besides these vessels two other large ones, the 'Constant Warwick' and the 'Guinea,' had been bought into the fleet. Substantial as this increase of force was, it was but the firstfruits of the new policy. During this and the following year no fewer than twenty-one new vessels were built or bought, besides thirteen prizes that were added to the Navy List. Such wholesale addition to the permanent force of the nation was without precedent and marks the beginning of a momentous change which is attributed mainly to Blake, but of which Popham was perhaps the true father.

It was an age of standing armies, and the new continental idea of military organisation which Charles had tried to graft upon the navy was now established by the men who had opposed him. In his ship-money fleets Charles had endeavoured to create a real standing navy. Up to this time, as we know, the naval defence of the kingdom had largely rested on what was really a naval militia centred on a small permanent nucleus. The navy of England was the whole of its shipping, the royal navy only that part of it which belonged to the King. In the Armada campaign the Elizabethans had seen well enough the weakness of the system, and as the war continued year after year it was seen to hamper trade for no adequate return in fighting strength. Its inexpediency was as clearly marked as its impotence, but the country was not then ripe or rich enough for a change. It was the great work of Blake and his colleagues that they succeeded in effecting what Elizabeth had not ventured to attempt, and Charles had ruined himself to achieve. In these

unprecedented increases to the fleet we have the beginning of the modern standing navy, the expression of the idea that the bulk of the national force upon the sea must be a permanent force. It was the natural outcome of the soldiers' administration. To them the laxity and disorder of the bastard fleets of the old days were unendurable. Again and again they had tried to introduce some kind of organisation which would enable a fleet to be handled with something like the precision of an army, but they had always failed, partly because they tried too much, but mainly because the merchantmen could not be got to obey or even see the sense of the new orders that were issued. As armies became, as they had done in recent years, more mobile and precise in their movements, the condition of things at sea became more and more unendurable to soldiers who had to do with fleets. To the men of the New Model—at that hour undoubtedly the last expression of the military art in Europe—it was impossible, and it was only by creating a naval force akin to that which they had perfected ashore that they could hope to teach the seamen the lesson they were so slow to learn and so sorely needed.

Thus it was that the definite and final appearance of England as a naval power in the Mediterranean coincided exactly with the final change in her naval system; and thus too it was that when the nations of Europe were looking askance, but as yet with no great anxiety, at the new military state, they were suddenly awakened to the disturbing fact that it had a navy no less formidable than the army at which every one was gaping.

Along with the larger movement of the transition went certain minor changes that left their mark. With the first attempts to create a real standing navy a new system for the classification of ships was introduced, and

with the ship-money fleets appears the germ of the modern system of rating. A Navy List showing the fleet divided into six rates exists as early as 1641; but, from a list ten years later, it does not appear that the classification was made on any very definite principle. The most constant factor is the number of the crew required to work the ship, and this was no doubt a good rough and ready measure of her relative importance, especially as crews were supposed to bear a general relation to tonnage. There were then only three first rates of from 60 to 100 guns. The second rates had crews of from 280 to 360 men and about 50 guns. Third rates had about 180 men and 40 to 50 guns. The fourth rates, a very large class, ran mostly from 120 to 150 men and 30 to 40 guns. In the fifth class no vessel had 100 men or over 24 guns. The sixth class included small fry of the old pinnace type, ketches, shallops and the like. Their complement was usually from 30 to 50 men. 'Frigates' appear in all the classes except the first.

Four years later—in 1655—a fresh classification was attempted, in which, owing to the increased scale of building, several of the old ships were degraded a rate. At the same time the first step was taken to give the rates a definite relation to guns, and a regular 'establishment' was laid down, though not very strictly adhered to. Thus first rates were assigned 91 guns, second rates 64, third rates 50, fourth rates 38, fifth rates 22, and sixth rates 8.

Another noticeable change was the entire disappearance of the secondary armament of small quick-firing, breech-loading guns, which had held their place throughout the Tudor period. No clear explanation of their obsolescence is to be found, but there is little doubt that it was the natural outcome of the revolution in naval tactics established by the Elizabethans. They had lifted gun-fire to

the first place, and, as boarding grew less and less in favour, the secondary armament, which was designed to clear for boarding or to repel boarders, fell with it. The same views led to the gradual diminution of superstructures, and in frigates to their entire disappearance in order to attain handiness in manœuvring for fire advantage; and with the disappearance of superstructures the secondary armament, which was mainly designed to defend them when a ship was entered, must also have inclined to disappear. The danger attending their use in the heat of action and the introduction of hand grenades may also have had something to do with it, no less than the increasing handiness and rapidity of fire of muzzle-loading guns. The English founders devised means of casting pieces lighter than had been the custom without decreasing their power. Indeed English ordnance and gunnery continued to hold their pre-eminence. The Dutch admiral De With, after his first action with Blake in 1652, could write, 'We found that the guns on their smallest frigates carry further than our heaviest cannons; and the English, I am sure, fired smarter and quicker than did many of ours.'<sup>1</sup> Such a startling statement must of course be discounted by remembering that De With was trying to get the States to improve his fleet; but there can be little doubt, after all allowances are made, that the navy of the Commonwealth was launched upon the Mediterranean in a state of general smartness and efficiency that had never been equalled.

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *First Dutch War* (*Navy Records Society*), ii. 360.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUPERT

THE impulse which finally guided England back into the Mediterranean was very remarkable. It was like the finger of destiny—the outcome of hostile machinations for which no such end could have been foreseen. It was a pious belief of the old herbalists that beside every poisonous weed there might be found growing a balm that was its antidote, and so it was that nature now seemed to deal with England.

From the same point—midway in the seventeenth century—which saw the transformation of the English navy, dates also a transformation in her foreign relations. The execution of the King may be said to have given a new colour to continental politics, at least so far as Great Britain was concerned. Their mainspring thenceforth for a century to come was the fortunes of the Stuart family. Great Britain appeared in the eyes of continental statesmen to be open to the same kind of action that they had been using so freely everywhere else, the same to which the Dutch were exposed by the differences between the Orange and the Republican parties, the same which France had been using against the Spanish Empire in Catalonia, Portugal, and the Two Sicilies, and the same which Spain was now paying back to France by her encouragement of the Fronde. It was a source of weakness to which the English Government had been a stranger

since the execution of Mary Stuart, and its reappearance at this moment was the most serious menace to the position of the new military state. It was new poison, and its effects might have been extremely grave had not the antidote been found springing up beside it. As it was, the very first effort to use the new form of attack was the means of bringing the threatened power immediately to the true method of meeting it. It was the fitting out of Rupert's squadron at Helvoetsluys and the encouragement which the new maritime war received from foreign powers that directly led to the reappearance of England in the Mediterranean.

After escaping the winter guard, Rupert and his brother proceeded direct to the coast of Munster, which from the days when Drake lay hid there, and long before, had been a kind of sanctuary for sea rovers like themselves. They were seriously under-manned; but there, if anywhere, they could hope to fill up with men of the right stamp, and with this object the Princes established themselves at Kinsale. At first the English Government did not take the matter very seriously. It was left to Ayscue and Penn, the admirals on the Irish station, to deal with. But their force soon proved inadequate. In February the Prince was reported at Bristol to have twenty-eight sail and to be rendering the adjacent seas wholly unsafe for commerce. It is true Ayscue's captains made several captures, including two of Rupert's smartest frigates. But Ireland was almost lost to the Commonwealth. Here and there her officers, like Coote, Jones, and Monk, were clinging to seaports till Cromwell could come to the rescue, and the Irish squadron could not watch the Princes and at the same time afford the desperate garrisons the relief they wanted. Moreover, Cromwell intended to land his army in Munster, and for that the

command of the seas must be recovered. The serious news of Rupert's growing strength, which had come in from Bristol, was followed in a week by the appointment of Popham, Blake, and Deane to command the fleet, and their first service was that all three of them were ordered to sea to deal with the pirate Princes.

It was no more than the situation seemed to demand. Mazarin, with his eye set on the establishment of absolute monarchy in France, dreaded the infection of Republicanism as much as in Elizabethan times Philip II. had dreaded the infection of heresy. The Cardinal declared that the cause of the Stuarts was the cause of all kings; he was hoping for a coalition to restore the exiled dynasty, and, so far as his own necessities would permit, was furthering the growth of the Stuart cause at sea. With the English Government the sense of danger was emphasised by a curious warning which seems to have had its weight. An old prophecy which was said to have been deposited in Trinity College, Cambridge, during Elizabeth's reign was brought to light. After foretelling the leading events of European history during the Thirty Years' War and down to the fall of the Stuarts, it declared that another Charles would arise, who would appear with a mighty navy on the shores of his father's kingdom and recover it by the aid of Denmark, Sweden, Holland, and France. Now it happened that these were the very powers of which Mazarin hoped to compose his coalition so soon as his hands were free from the Spanish war; and though the coincidence throws doubt on the genuineness of the prophecy, it must have added to its moral effect.<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising therefore to find the Council of State addressing to their

<sup>1</sup> 'The prophecy of Paulus Grebnerus,' *Domestic Calendar*, May 1649. Mazarin's *Letters (Documents Inédits)*, iii. 225, 339; and cf. Deane to Popham, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* Aug. 23, 1649.

Generals, on the eve of sailing, a serious exhortation that Rupert's fleet must be destroyed. It would avail little, they said, that they kept the seas clear during the summer with the large force which had been placed at their command. The prestige of the republic depended on the Prince's force being utterly shattered so that he could not boast he had maintained himself in the face of the whole navy of the Commonwealth.<sup>1</sup>

Having caught Rupert in Kinsale, the Generals blockaded him there and resolved to order Popham home at once, as they were strong enough without him. There during the whole summer Blake and Deane kept the revolted ships, and snapped up a number of others which they caught cruising with a Stuart commission. No attempt, however, was made to destroy Rupert's fleet in the harbour, as Leveson had destroyed the Spaniards in Castlehaven fifty years before; but this was probably due to the powerful works with which the harbour had been fortified since that time, and in any case the sound strategy of the moment was to preserve the fleet in being, and so prevent any communication between Munster and the continent till Cromwell's work in Ireland was done. The last consideration is probably the explanation of the Generals' apparent lack of enterprise, for Blake at least was ere long to show how little he feared harbour defences. As all the ports of Munster had to be watched as well as Kinsale, there was work enough for the fleet without risking anything, and it is significant that it was the Generals at Sea who most strongly urged that Cromwell should strike south first, in order to reduce the ports and so relieve the almost intolerable pressure on the fleet. So convincing indeed were their arguments that it was

<sup>1</sup> Council of State to the Generals at Sea, May 19, 1649, *Domestic Calendar*, p. 150.

only through a series of accidents that Ireton was not detached to Munster from Milford Haven with a wing of the Lord General's army.<sup>1</sup>

By midsummer the blockading fleet was in so serious a condition that Deane had to be sent away with part of it to recruit, and Blake was left alone. For three months more he hung on, refusing, as we have seen, every inducement to let go his prey, till with the approach of the equinox he found it necessary to send home his largest vessels. Shifting his flag to a third-rate, he still held his ground, watching anxiously for Cromwell, whose victorious army was already pressing southward. His task was now doubly difficult. As the pressure from the north made Rupert's position every day less secure, so the boisterous weather rendered the blockade more difficult, till some time about the last week in October a gale forced the blockading squadron to stand off to sea, and by the time it could gather again Rupert had flown.<sup>2</sup>

Seven vessels were all he could carry out. The rest he was unable either to man or to equip, and he had to leave them laid up to fall into Cromwell's hands. But his little fleet still included the revolted navy ships that were left to him, and, with Scilly for a base, he was still dangerous. He had told the royal exiles some months before that, even if he were forced from Kinsale, he doubted not, as he wrote, 'ere long to see Scilly a second Venice . . . where after a little we may get the King a good subsistence, and I believe we shall make shift to live in spite of all

<sup>1</sup> Deane to Popham, July 3, 1649, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) p. 19; same to same, Sept. 22, *ibid.* p. 40; cf. *Ormonde MSS.* July 10, ii. 99-102.

<sup>2</sup> The exact date of his escape is not certain. Heath's *Chronicle* (p. 254) gives it as October 24, but the Council of State in London knew of it on October 27, *Domestic Calendar*, p. 366. On October 2 they had heard that three of his vessels had escaped in a storm, but it was not certain that Rupert was with them, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* p. 43.

factions.'<sup>1</sup> The Council of State were not a little anxious. The Canary merchantmen were nearly due in the Channel, and if Rupert caught them he would have a new fleet at a stroke, besides the rich spoil. He was actually reported to be lying off the Land's End waiting for them, but as a matter of fact he knew the activity of the Generals had made the Narrow Seas too hot to hold him, and he had borne away out into the ocean. For a month he was lost sight of, but on December 1 came news that he was capturing English merchantmen off the coast of Spain, and the Generals at Sea immediately received an order to fit out a squadron of ten sail to hunt him away. And so was set on foot the fleet that was once more to carry the English flag into the Mediterranean.

The commander that would naturally have been chosen was 'Black' Deane, as he was called, the junior of the three Generals. The outlook at the time was so serious that it was natural to wish to keep the senior ones at home. The news was that Rupert was off Cadiz, negotiating for permission to sell his prizes in Spanish ports and use them as he wished. Both in the Spanish Netherlands and in France similar permission had been granted to Stuart privateers, and there was every chance that Rupert would succeed in his desire. As no foreign Government had yet recognised the Republic, negotiations were impossible. France was even claiming to treat British commerce as pirate goods, that were fair game for every man, and relations in consequence had grown so severely strained that war was looked for at any moment. As it happened, Deane was ill. But there was no time to be lost. Blake was in the west, on his way from Ireland, and the Council of State, without consulting any one, ordered him to proceed straight to Portsmouth and take

<sup>1</sup> Warburton, iii. 220.

up the command without coming to London. At the same time the Trinity House was ordered to furnish sailing directions for the Mediterranean, and bills were to be prepared on Leghorn and other places to provide the fleet with money.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly a demonstration in the Mediterranean was intended if the chase should lead thither. The preparations were pushed on with unprecedented vigour, and grew as they proceeded. On January 10, 1650, a captain who had been watching the French coast reported to Popham a great naval activity. Every one said it was to reinforce Rupert, and the anxious officer begged his chief not to let the fleet that was ordered 'for the Straits' to go forth ill-manned. The Secretary of the Admiralty at the same time assured Popham that his only fear was that the fleet was too weak to enter the Straits, and that it was to be doubled. The fact was that Mazarin had taken alarm. Bordeaux was in rebellion; he was blockading it from the sea; and he had been informed that the English preparations against Rupert were really intended for its relief.<sup>2</sup>

It was but natural that Mazarin should expect from the men he so deeply despised a repetition of the idle strategy of Buckingham's war. So obvious was the move that we can only wonder at the brilliance of the new spirit that was infusing English policy. In spite of news of further naval preparations in Ostend and elsewhere, which might seem to be the beginning of the prophesied coalition, neither the Government nor the Generals were to be turned from the true objective. First and foremost it was Rupert's fleet, and then the Mediterranean. Since

<sup>1</sup> *Domestic Calendar*, 424-425, 489.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Keyser to Popham, January 10, 1650; Coytmore to Popham and Blake, January 12. *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* 54. Mazarin to the Duc d'Epemon, *Lettres*, iii. 432.

it had become known that it was in a Portuguese and not a Spanish port that Rupert had been received, the latter object became even more remote. Blake was to be hurried to Lisbon immediately with such ships as could be got ready, and Popham was to follow in the spring with a reserve and the bills on Leghorn. There was a possibility that the demonstration in the Mediterranean would not be necessary, for Spain was already opening her eyes to the value of an alliance with the Republic as an enemy of France and Portugal, and Blake was to carry out an envoy to Madrid. When in February he got to sea his instructions were mainly concerned with directions to deal with the Princes and their 'revolted ships,' and with those of any commander, no matter what his commission, who attempted to join them.

Meanwhile Rupert at Lisbon had been as active. With the produce of his captured cargoes he had managed to thoroughly equip not only his old fleet but also his three prizes, and he had already dropped down the Tagus as far as Belem Castle to start on a fresh cruise when Blake's fleet was seen anchoring just outside in Cascaes Bay. At the last moment the younger Vane had joined the fleet as envoy to the King of Portugal, and he was immediately landed with the Parliament's letter explaining that Blake had been sent out to recover their revolted warships and punish the pirates who had taken them. He was followed by the lieutenant of Blake's flagship with a friendly message pointing out that it was clearly a special providence that the two arch-pirates had been detained at Lisbon till his squadron had arrived, and he trusted, therefore, the King would excuse any hostile attempt that might be made upon them in the harbour, as there was no other way of making it. It would seem that in this spirit Blake actually made an attempt to

enter the river. But as the finger of Providence was not so clear to the King of Portugal as it was to the Commonwealth admiral, warning guns from the batteries forced him to return to his anchorage and proceed with the negotiations.

On March 18, about a week after Blake's arrival, Vane succeeded in making a preliminary agreement, by which, in case of bad weather, Blake was to be permitted to enter the river and anchor in Oeiras Bay—the road which lies between the outer defences of St. Julian's Castle and the inner at Belem. But no hostilities were to take place, and he was to retire outside again so soon as the weather permitted. This of course would never do, and a few days later Blake sent in his vice-admiral to demand either the restitution of the revolted ships or permission to seize them by force where they lay, or in the alternative a peremptory order for both fleets to leave the harbour at the same time. If all these proposals were refused he was to demand liberty of the port in accordance with subsisting treaties.

Meanwhile, however, an accredited envoy had arrived from Charles II., and, in pursuance of the same treaties, was making demands in the opposite sense, and requesting the King to refuse all recognition of the Commonwealth.<sup>1</sup> For all parties it was a situation of extreme difficulty. The King could not make up his mind, and Blake had no real authority, even if he had the power to force his hand. It looked like another long summer blockade with the additional danger that any day a French or some other foreign squadron might appear to join hands with Rupert. This was what the English Government chiefly feared, and they were stirring every nerve to get

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Elyott to John IV. of Portugal, March 19 (n.s.), 1650, *Hodgkin MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xv. ii.) p. 120.

the second division out, with Popham in person at its head, and with such instructions as would leave no room for hesitation. Still it was not till the middle of April that he could hoist his flag, and a month more before he finally cleared the Channel with the 'Resolution,' a first rate, one second rate, two fourth rates, and four powerful armed merchantmen.<sup>1</sup>

The result of these provoking delays was that what was feared had happened. Two French men-of-war, of 50 and 28 guns, had appeared off Lisbon to join the Princes, but their captains mistook the English fleet for Rupert's, and Blake was able quietly to take possession of them. Still as yet he had no authority to make reprisals on the French, and when the King demanded the release of the vessels he felt bound to let them go free. It was not till they had joined Rupert that Blake heard that the Portuguese Court had finally made up its mind to stand with the Royalists. Then he did not hesitate to act. On May 16, as Popham was clearing the Channel on his way south, the annual Brazil fleet, consisting of eighteen sail, came out of the Tagus. He had no definite instruction to seize Portuguese ships; but nine of them were English chartered for the voyage, and as a British admiral he had the usual authority to compel the services of all English ships he met. The nine vessels were therefore stayed, and with the ready consent of the crews he added them to his force.

Ten days later Popham stood into Cascaes Bay and showed Blake the additional instructions he had brought. By these the admirals were authorised to attack the Princes wherever they found them. If the King of Portugal offered any objection, they were to make reprisals

<sup>1</sup> Popham's Journal of the voyage is in the *Leybourne-Popham MSS* p. 61 *et seq.*

on all Portuguese ships, and they were further expressly directed to make general reprisals on the subjects and ships of the French King. This was tantamount to the declaration of a naval war with both Portugal and France, and as the force at the Generals' disposal now consisted of about twenty navy ships and over a dozen armed merchantmen, they were quite in a position to make themselves felt.

To the King of Spain the situation was eminently satisfactory. The whole of his naval force that could be spared from its ordinary duties was being concentrated at Palermo under Don John of Austria for the recovery of the places which the French had seized in Tuscany, and nothing could suit him better than to see England drawn into a naval war with his two hereditary enemies. Though he still delayed his recognition of the Commonwealth, Ascham, its diplomatic agent, had been received at Cadiz with marked respect, and the Royalist envoys with coldness. This clearing of the diplomatic air was, however, suddenly checked. Ascham reached Madrid the very day Popham cast anchor in Cascaes Bay, and on the morrow he was brutally murdered at his inn by some cavalier swashbucklers. This outrage was of course unknown to the Generals; but before taking any hostile step against the Portuguese they decided it was better to send for Vane and provide for his safety. He came to the fleet, and as soon as he saw what the Parliament's new instructions were, he determined not to return. Thereupon a formal demand for the revolted ships was sent in by Blake's lieutenant, and four days were given for an answer, so imperious had the note of the Republic become. The time passed without any reply, and when at last it came it was so unsatisfactory that the Generals resolved to begin operations.

Blake's original division by this time was very short of water and beverage, and a small French squadron was reported to be hovering about Cadiz, seeking for an opportunity of joining Rupert. As a first step, therefore, he transferred his flag to Popham's ship and sent his own, the 'George,' with seven more of his squadron to the southward. They were placed under the command of his rear-admiral, Richard Badiley, a seaman officer of whom a great deal more was to be heard, with instructions to cruise for the Frenchmen and, after dealing with them, to procure from Cadiz all that was wanted.<sup>1</sup> Another frigate was detached to watch to the northward and water at the Burlings, while the 'Constant Warwick' was sent home with Vane to report to the Government. At the same time reprisals were commenced by seizing all the fishing boats within reach, and some of these were armed for inshore work. The main squadron that was left off Lisbon, thus reduced, consisted chiefly of merchantmen, and with it the Generals settled down to the blockade.

Though a few small vessels got through, it proved very effective, and the only warship that attempted to run in was captured. Still all June passed away, Badiley's squadron did not return, and drink got lower and lower. Information too was received that the King of Portugal was making extensive naval preparations in order to join Rupert in driving the English off. The rest of Blake's old division had to be sent north for water, and the situation was growing critical. It was not till the middle of July that one of the frigates rejoined from Cadiz. She had to report that they had found three ships of the French navy at anchor in Lagos Bay. By

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 2, and *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* p. 67.

promptly cutting their cables and being clean, two had escaped, but the third of 36 guns was brought to action by the 'Adventure,' a ship of equal force, and after a long engagement forced to surrender. So hard was the fight, and so heavy the English fire, that she went down two hours after striking.<sup>1</sup> As for the rest of Badiley's squadron, the Generals were assured they would speedily rejoin with all that was wanted. It was none too soon. Four more days passed, and still the wind hung in the north and kept the longed-for vessels away. To make matters worse a number of ships were seen dropping down from Lisbon, till, by the 22nd, more than a score were lying at anchor in Oeiras Bay, and still there was no sign of the missing squadron. Truly might the Generals say, as they wrote home to the Council of State, 'It hath pleased God in this place to exercise us with various and mixed providences.' Four more days passed without any news of Badiley's ships, nor had any sign of them appeared when the morning of the 26th broke with a fair wind off the shore and Rupert was seen coming out. Twenty-six ships and eighteen caravels could be counted, and against these the Generals had only ten sail to show besides the requisitioned Brazil vessels. But they did not hesitate a moment. The largest of the French ships was leading with four fire-ships, and about a mile astern of them came the 'Constant Reformation,' the Prince's flagship. To

<sup>1</sup> An account of the action is in Gibson's 'Reminiscences' (Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 2). As an indication of the English methods of relying on gun fire, it may be noted that 'the "Adventure" men called on their captain to board the French ship, which he denied until he could see the blood run out of their scuppers.' Gibson says there were four ships, and he is borne out by Gentillot's 'Draft Instructions' (Guizot, *Hist. de la République Anglaise*, I. app. xvii.). It is there stated that the captain of the captured ship was the Chevalier de Fonteny, and that he was 'tué réellement après la prise.' Possibly, however, this refers to another case. See a similar story, *post*, p. 217, note.

avoid the fire-ships the Generals weighed immediately and stood off to sea, but as soon as a reasonable offing was obtained they lay to and waited. Still the enemy had the wind and held on; but presently it shifted a bit to the southward. The blockading fleet immediately filled away, and, having with a short tack secured the weather gage, made a dash in to cut off the leading ships. But the moment the enemy saw they had lost the windward position they drew back, and were soon standing in again on their course with the Generals in full chase. A few shots were exchanged, but that was all, and as night fell the Princes were safe again under the Portuguese guns.

For both sides it was a disappointment. Rupert had failed to get out and the Generals had failed to bring him to action. The blockaders had been perhaps too eager, and next morning, when the attempt was renewed in a dense fog, the Generals stood off as soon as they discovered the Prince's purpose. In vain they lay to, and let him get dead to weather of them, hoping thus to induce him to attack; but again the day passed away without result. The Generals were now getting desperate. They had but four days' drink left, and could not hold on much longer. But, as the evening closed in, the situation changed. Seven sail were seen in the offing, and, in grave anxiety lest they meant the long-feared relief from France, the Generals stood out to meet them. They proved to be Badiley's missing division from Cadiz, and at daylight they joined. During the morning every captain had all he needed in abundance, and the whole fleet stood in to attack. But the wind held stubbornly to the eastward and every effort was unavailing. That night, however, they anchored close in with cables short-hauled, hoping to surprise their enemy in the morning; but when day broke there was not a sail to be seen. Rupert had aban-

doned his attempt to escape, and the weary blockade had to begin again.

Not for another month were the Princes able to renew their attempt. It was in the first week of September. Blake was alone plying off the Rock of Lisbon with only ten sail. The Brazil merchantmen had been sent home as no longer able to keep the sea. Most of the other ships had just gone with Popham to refit at Cadiz.<sup>1</sup> The morning of the 7th was again foggy, but about eleven o'clock Blake was aware that the Portuguese fleet and part of Rupert's were putting to sea. Then it would seem he lost them again; but about four in the afternoon the fog cleared, and he found himself, with only two frigates in company, close to the whole of the hostile fleet, numbering thirty-six sail, with Rupert leading. It was a perilous position, but 'by God's good providence,' as Blake wrote, the enemy were to leeward of him. Without any hesitation at the overwhelming disparity of numbers, the General bore down to engage the Prince's ship. Rupert was nothing loath, and, having given orders to reserve his fire, held on to close in silence. So at last the two antagonists were at arm's length. Neither would give way; but Blake's master pointed out that, holding as they were, it was very doubtful if they could weather the Prince. 'Can you stem him?'—that is 'ram' him—asked the General. 'Yes,' said the master, 'but then we shall hazard both ships.' 'I'll run that hazard,' Blake answered, 'rather than bear up for the enemy;' and they held on.<sup>2</sup> Seeing a collision was inevitable, Rupert gave way, and as he bore up Blake, who could trust his gunners

<sup>1</sup> The absence of Popham is to be inferred from the fact that his flagship was one of the vessels detached, and that Blake alone signed the despatch relating to the incident. *Hist. MSS. Com.* xvii. i. 536.

<sup>2</sup> Gibson's 'Reminiscences' in Gardiner's *Dutch War*, i. 13. Blake to the Council of State, October 14, 1650, *Hist. MSS. Com.* xii. i. 536.

better than the Prince, let fly. So just was his aim that Rupert's fore-topmast came crashing down at the cap. Hopelessly disabled for the moment, the Prince was forced to bear up into the shelter of the Portuguese fleet, and as he did so the fog closed down again, and Blake very wisely bore away to get touch with the rest of his ships. It was not till next morning that he found them, and then it was known that once more the Princes had been forced to withdraw into the Tagus. It was practically the end of the blockade, and that rift in the mist was the only chance the two opposing admirals ever had of looking into the muzzles of each other's guns.

At so late a period of the year it was hopeless to think of destroying Rupert as he was. But a more effective method of dealing with the situation was at hand. The homeward bound fleet from Brazil was daily expected, and in its capture Blake saw a means of making the King of Portugal weary of his guest. A month before the home Government had suggested to the Generals the advisability of sending a squadron to intercept it at the Azores, but they had wisely declined to divide their force. Their wisdom was now to be rewarded. A week after the encounter with Rupert the Brazil fleet, to the number of twenty-three sail, was sighted making for the Tagus. Blake gave chase, and after a three-hours' fight succeeded in destroying the vice-flagship and capturing the rear-admiral and six other vessels, with four thousand chests of sugar and four hundred prisoners. Having administered this sharp chastisement to the Portuguese Government, he carried his prizes into Cadiz and left the Tagus open.

The reason of this move is nowhere given. Blake has been blamed for its consequences, but there was certainly much to be said for the course he took. The situation which the Commonwealth had to face when Blake began

his campaign had entirely changed. Ireland had been reduced to submission; Scotland had been paralysed by Cromwell's victory at Dunbar; and the great Royalist reaction, which Rupert's fleet had been designed to support from the sea, was well in hand without his having been able to give it any real assistance. Between them the Generals at Sea had been able to prevent any dangerous concentration round his flag, and he was reduced to the position of a mere buccaneer. Whatever Blake's information may have been, he might justly have concluded that the King of Portugal would now be only too glad to get rid of so costly and discredited a guest, and that the best chance of finally destroying him was to see him a friendless wanderer on the high seas. In British waters he could do no harm, for Popham was back there with his division; and if he attempted to find refuge in the Mediterranean, Blake at Cadiz was in a position to chase with a practical certainty of success. Short therefore of forcing the King of Portugal to deliver up his supplicant, a course he was most unlikely to take, Blake could not have done better than give him a chance of honourably getting rid of the Prince's presence.

How lightly Blake regarded Rupert's force is clear from the dispositions he now made. Popham, as has been said, had already gone home to resume his duties in the Channel. Five more vessels, including his flagship, were now detached under Captain Badiley to escort home the Brazil prizes and a convoy of Levant merchantmen that had rendezvoused within the Straits at Malaga. Blake himself, with the seven ships that remained, resolved to stay out a month or more longer, contrary to all precedent, 'to do the Commonwealth'—so he wrote—'all the service I can hereabout or elsewhere, as the providence of God shall direct me.' There can be no doubt he was

thoroughly prepared for what followed. Shortly after the capture of the Brazil ships some kind of unofficial negotiations seem to have been commenced with the Court of Lisbon for a preliminary arrangement by which reprisals were to cease on condition that Rupert's fleet should no longer receive protection in Portuguese harbours. The result of these overtures, according to Royalist authority, was that some time in September the Princes were formally requested to leave.<sup>1</sup>

It was on October 12 that they put to sea with six sail, and for some days, as it would appear, they hung about off the Tagus looking for a Frenchman who was expected to join them. Blake at all events got no news of the movement. Not expecting his recent feat to have so immediate an effect, he was still in Cadiz busily cleaning his ships for the winter cruise. It was not till two days after Rupert had put to sea that Badiley's squadron started for home, and on the morrow a despatch vessel arrived from England which put Blake into immediate activity. What the message was that it brought is not certain, but there can be little doubt that it ordered him to turn his attention to active reprisals upon the French. Under cover of the exiled King's flag they had continued to prey on the commerce of the Commonwealth in a manner that was scarcely removed from piracy. They had imprisoned her merchants and confiscated their goods. In vain the English Government had protested, and at last its patience was exhausted. It was not till the day the despatch vessel reached Blake that the Judges of the Admiralty reported, apparently in answer to French protests, that justice had been demanded in the French courts and had been refused, and that therefore general reprisals were perfectly lawful. Their decision was a

<sup>1</sup> Warburton, iii. 313.

foregone conclusion, and the Council of State could hardly have waited for it before letting Blake know what was coming. At all events, the moment he received the despatches he hoisted his flag in the 'Phoenix,' a fourth rate, and with three other frigates, which were all he had ready for sea, hurried out to take up a station in the Straits' mouth. Here, after a four days' cruise, he fell in with a French navy ship of 36 guns, under the command of a certain Chevalier de la Lande. Deceived by seeing the Admiral's flag flying on the 'Phoenix' into believing himself overmatched, the Chevalier came aboard to surrender; but, on seeing how weak the ship was, instead of delivering his sword he began to insinuate he had been trepanned into coming aboard. Therefore Blake, in a spirit of almost Quixotic chivalry more characteristic of an Elizabethan than a hard-headed Parliamentary officer, told the Frenchman to return to his ship and fight it out. He did so, but nothing could induce his crew to handle a gun, and finally he had to come aboard again and surrender his ship—'of such dread,' writes a seaman of the time, 'was the English courage and sea conduct then.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This story, which was told shortly by Whitelocke, has been of late years dismissed by naval historians as utterly incredible, mainly because neither Blake nor his captain, Saltonstall, mentions it (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xiii. i. 538, 543). Blake merely says, 'After some dispute he yielded upon quarter.' But Whitelocke's story is confirmed and explained by the recently discovered 'Reminiscences' of Gibson (*Dutch War*, i. 7). The prize, which was brought into the navy as the 'Success,' was the 'Jules,' a vessel that had been serving before Bordeaux under the command of M. le Chevalier de la Lande (Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 182, and Gentillot's draft instructions, Guizot, *Hist. de la République Anglaise*, i. App. xvii. 465). Blake says he was 'brother to him that was sunk by the "Adventure" frigate.' These two brothers seem to have been among the most active French officers who had been preying on English commerce. The French have an incredible story that one of them, some time before this, had endeavoured to force an English squadron to lower their flags to his own, and, being captured for his temerity, was there and then beheaded for a pirate (Jal,

We may assume that this was the vessel that Rupert was looking for. It was certainly the object of Blake's move, and he immediately returned to Cadiz to pick up the rest of his ships and to add the prize to his squadron. No step could have been more unlucky. It was on October 20 that the Frenchman was captured, and a week later intelligence reached Blake at Cadiz that on the 26th Rupert had appeared at Malaga and attempted to destroy some English merchantmen in the harbour. While Blake's back was turned the Princes, having failed to find their French consort, had entered the Straits without her. It was their only chance. 'Being destitute of a port,' wrote one of their followers, 'we take the confines of the Mediterranean for our harbours, poverty and despair being companions, and revenge our guide.'

In a moment Blake was on their heels. There was no time to get the prize ready, and it had to be left behind. With his other seven ships he reached Malaga on the 30th, and the same day was away again for Alicante. He had heard that Rupert had lawlessly burnt some English vessels in Velez Malaga, in spite of the Spanish protests, and had passed on.<sup>1</sup> 'I intend,' he wrote home under sail, 'God willing, to pursue as far as Providence shall direct.' He had clean freshly-victualled ships to his hand and had nothing to stop him. On November 2, after turning Cape Gata, he captured another Frenchman of twenty guns, and on the morrow, close to Cape Palos, he fell in with the 'Roebuck' of Rupert's squadron, and

*op. cit.* p. 187). The Chevalier is again mentioned in an unsavoury piece of intelligence work in *Mazarin's Letters*, iii. 761.

<sup>1</sup> The excuse which Rupert is said to have given for defying the port authorities was that he wanted to catch Captain Morley, 'one of the four and chiefest traitors who had signed the sentence of death of the King of Great Britain, his uncle' (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xiii. i. 548). No one of that name signed the death warrant.

forced her to strike. The next night he chased two more of the Prince's vessels, with two prizes in company, into Cartagena. The fact was that Rupert, finding the Governors of the Spanish ports were determined not to submit to his lawless depredations, had retired towards the Balearic islands, with the intention of cruising between the islands and the Spanish coast. While thus engaged he was overtaken by a gale that scattered his force, and some of them had stood in towards the coast, while he and his brother in the 'Reformation' and 'Swallow' had held on for the rendezvous he had appointed in the almost deserted island of Formentara. There, under a stone marked with a white flag, he left directions for his consorts to find him. The paper still exists.<sup>1</sup> It orders that all prizes shall be carried to Sardinia, and thence, if he was not found in Cagliari Bay, his captains were to send to him for further instructions to the port which he had already fixed for his destination. As Blake suspected, it was Toulon, and thither the two Princes presently made their way.

Meanwhile Blake had put into Cartagena, and, having driven ashore another of Rupert's ships that was endeavouring to enter the harbour, was demanding the surrender of the others in no humble key. 'It is of very high consequence to the Parliament of England,' he wrote to the Governor, 'and may be of no small concernment to his Majesty (the King of Spain) to give this business a speedy and present despatch, that, being master of these ships which are come into this harbour, I may be at liberty to pursue, and by God's blessing to seize upon, the remainder of their strength before they join themselves with the French, which is likely to be their last refuge.'

<sup>1</sup> Welbeck MSS. (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xiii. i.) 539. It is dated Nov. 5-15.

It was an argument well calculated to appeal to the Spanish Government, and Blake's broad appreciation of the political significance of his fleet is another mark of his high qualifications as an admiral. It will be remembered that Don John had been gathering at Messina a fleet to take advantage of the command of the sea which the troubles in France had left in Spanish hands. The opportunity had been used with success, and during the summer he had recovered all that the Spaniards had lost in Tuscany. On Michaelmas day, however, Mazarin had succeeded in arranging a pacification by which Bordeaux had returned to its allegiance. The sore which the Spaniards had kept open so long was healed, and at such a moment an addition to the French strength in the Mediterranean was the last thing they wished to see. The situation equally emphasised the importance of being on the best possible terms with the new military republic which was so viciously showing its teeth within the Straits. Accordingly, the officials at Cartagena were extremely polite, but protested they could do nothing without instructions, and finally induced Blake to consent to hold his hand till they had communicated with Madrid. But for this Rupert's men dared not wait. The next day they made a desperate attempt to get to sea, and, in endeavouring to weather the blockading force, were all driven ashore and totally wrecked.

It was enough for Blake. Contenting himself with writing a letter to the King to demand the guns, cables, and anchors of the wrecked ships, he left one of his vessels with the two French prizes to receive them, and himself sailed in chase of Rupert and Maurice. He had captured papers which disclosed the rendezvous in the Balearic islands, and there he sought his quarry. As we know, the Princes were already flown, but Blake must

have discovered Rupert's fresh instructions, and perhaps proceeded as far as Sardinia in search of him. At all events, it was not till after a three weeks' cruise that he was back at Cartagena, where he must have learned that the Princes had been received in Toulon and were out of his reach.

But his work was done and he might well rest satisfied with its result. 'Indeed,' wrote one of his captains, 'the Lord hath proved us exceedingly, since we have had little of the arm of the flesh amongst us—I mean, since our great and powerful fleet of so many ships were reduced only to a little squadron of ten ships under the command of Colonel Blake: for since then we have taken the Brazil fleet, and after that, our squadron being now but three ships and four frigates, we have taken three French ships and destroyed and taken all Rupert's ships, seven in number, only two now remaining. And thus hath God owned us in the midst of our implacable enemies, so that the terror of God is amongst them. Five chaseth a hundred, and ten a thousand, which is marvelous in our eyes. The Spaniards are now exceeding kind unto us.' It was true enough. If they had been friendly ever since Popham and Blake took a high hand with Portugal, they were almost obsequious now. The pariah state had stretched out its hand into the Mediterranean and could no longer be ignored. On the very day the pious captain wrote his letter, Philip IV. recognised the Commonwealth by signing letters of credence for an ambassador who was to proceed to London in order to apologise for Ascham's murder, and to promise the punishment of the culprits, and shelter for the English fleets in Spanish ports. Portugal too was hurrying off an agent to try to come to terms, and it could not be long before the rest would have to do the same. Blake's work was indeed

done, and shortly afterwards he went round to Cadiz to return home.

But of all this nothing was known at home; even his exploit on the Brazil fleet had not yet been heard of in London. All the Government knew was that Rupert had escaped from Lisbon, and their faith in the soldier they had trusted was broken. By a strange irony, as Blake was in the act of destroying Rupert's fleet as an effective force, they were sending out to supersede him. The officer selected was William Penn, a seaman born and bred, who, though not yet thirty years old, had for the past two or three years been serving the Parliament as a flag-officer on the Irish station. His instructions were to go South with such ships as could be spared from the Winter Guard, take over from Blake any of his squadron that might still be fit for sea, and order him home.<sup>1</sup>

The appointment is highly significant. From his boyhood Penn had been carefully trained under his father for the naval service. All his life he had been afloat, and the selection of such a man, who indeed was destined to live as the typical representative of the old seaman school, marks in the clearest possible way the revulsion of feeling that was going on at headquarters. For the moment it looked as though the Commonwealth was about to abandon its policy of soldier admirals. But their distrust of the Colonel who was to shed so much lustre on their naval administration did not last long. Even before Penn had actually left the Channel with his first division the Council of State had received Blake's letter from Malaga, announcing that he had entered the Mediterranean, and meant, God willing, to pursue the Princes wherever Providence should direct.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Council of State to Blake, Nov. 2, 1650. *Thurloe, S.P. i. 166.*

<sup>2</sup> Council of State Proceedings, Dec. 13, 1650. *Dom. Cal. p. 468.*

It was enough to show them the mistake they were making. Penn's instructions were modified, and fresh orders were sent to Blake to stay where he was with the force he had at his command and finish what he had begun so well; and finally, when the second division of Penn's fleet sailed, it carried orders that he was to place himself under Blake's command. With Blake in the Mediterranean, and in such a temper as his letter disclosed, there was nothing to fear. 'The seven ships left with Colonel Blake,' wrote Vane to Cromwell, 'are very likely to be the total ruin of Rupert's fleet and a great terror to the French. This hath made the Spaniard solemnly acknowledge us. Portugal likewise stands knocking at the door. . . .' So they rightly read the effect of their flag being displayed within the Straits. In the same week that they sent Blake his new orders and Penn cleared the Channel, the French agent, who was trying to treat unofficially, was ordered to quit the kingdom, the Portuguese envoy was refused a hearing, and the new Spanish Ambassador, in solemn act before Parliament, recognised the pariah state.

As it happened, the new orders for Blake never reached him, but none the less did he reap the reward of what he had already achieved. On January 8, 1651, his proceedings were approved by Parliament, and he was ordered to be thanked. Early in February he was back in England. On the 13th he had the honour of making his relation to the House of 'the wonderful appearance of the powerful hand of God with him in his service at sea,' and was thereupon voted a grant of a thousand pounds 'for his great and faithful service.'

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIRST MEDITERRANEAN SQUADRON

BLAKE'S return in modest triumph at the beginning of 1651, and the sailing of the two squadrons that were to relieve him, mark the definite adoption by England of a policy of activity in the Mediterranean. Through the half century that had come to an end we have traced the complex forces that had been drawing her reluctantly to her destiny. We have seen her appearing in her new sphere, at first piratically, in spite of herself, much as she had begun her career upon the ocean. We have watched the effects of that appearance as it rapidly revolutionised the old Italian conditions by the dominating power of the sailing war-vessel and the seamanship of the North. One by one, every government that had its seat around the land-girt sea was made to feel the meaning of the change, and with every shift of European politics we have heard some fresh voice calling down the Northern powers to adjust the scale. Every time that call was answered, however faintly, we have seen the great continental struggle change its stride as soldiers and diplomatists, barely conscious of the cause, shifted uneasily at their work from end to end of Europe. There had been moments when it seemed that England, by using the arena that was opened to her, might have interfered almost like a *deus ex machina*. Yet still she held back, as she has done soberly before almost every decisive step that has led her to greatness.

But now her hour had come, and the new and vigorous blood that was tingling in the veins of her Government set her boldly forward. The revolting sacrifice with which she had consecrated her liberties had outraged all Europe. By general consent she was treated as an outcast among nations, and scarcely had the new administration recognised its ostracism before it saw the way to bring Europe to reason. Spain was the first to fall; for of all the great powers she was the one that lay most exposed to the new weapon. She had besides an hereditary dread of English enmity, and her exhausting struggle with France had done everything to emphasise the importance of an English alliance. Still so violent was her antipathy to the regicide Government, that even in the depth of her distress she could not bring herself to hold out a hand. Yet, with the first exhibition of the new force that the Commonwealth was able to display, her reserve had broken down. Blake had but to enter the Mediterranean and deliver his sounding blow on Rupert for all hesitation to vanish, and in a month or two a special ambassador was in London, and the outcast Government had been recognised by what was still regarded as the proudest and most powerful Court in Europe. Small wonder then if the Commonwealth, in spite of the serious calls upon its navy in the Narrow Seas, resolved to continue the policy which Blake had so successfully inaugurated.

It must not be supposed, however, that this policy was adopted entirely or quite consciously for political reasons. It was rather a reaction of that great internal change which, as we have seen, finally established the navy on its modern footing. Henceforward the national navy was to be a regular force of Government ships, built and maintained for war alone. In sympathy with the growth of

standing armies, merchantmen, however powerful, were to be relegated to the position they have occupied ever since. Though still to be used as occasional auxiliaries, they were no longer to be counted on for the strength of the navy, but, on the contrary, were to be regarded as one of its burdens. No change in our naval history is greater or more far-reaching than this. It was no mere change of organisation; it was a revolution in the fundamental conception of naval defence. For the first time the protection of the mercantile marine came to be regarded almost as the chief end for which the regular navy existed, and the whole of naval strategy underwent a profound modification in English thought.

In Spain this idea of the functions of a navy had existed from the time when Philip II. had revived his marine for the protection of his oceanic commerce. In the Mediterranean it had also existed since the rise of the Mussulman corsairs; but France and the Italian states, no less than Spain, had confined it practically to operations within the Straits. Similarly, although the germ of the idea had always existed in England, it had been confined to the Narrow Seas. For nearly two centuries it had been the custom for the royal navy to provide a regular escort, or 'wafters' as they were called, for the annual wine and wool fleets in the Bay of Biscay, the Channel, and the North Sea; but all ships trading to the Levant had been expected to take care of themselves. The other Northern powers had acted on the same principle. Of late years, it is true, the Dutch had somewhat extended the theory by maintaining a regular squadron about the Straits, and we have seen how James I. attempted to do the same. The effort came to little, for it was premature so long as the old theory of a navy existed. To the Commonwealth it was left to add the

lasting reform to all the others which it attempted with less success, and it was the consequent revolution in strategy that perhaps even more than purely political considerations pushed her into the Mediterranean.

The revolution cannot be too strongly insisted on. It is the failure to appreciate its importance that has led to the keynote of the naval policy of the time being so little noticed. When strategists of the seventeenth century speak of the Mediterranean, it is almost always in terms of commerce protection, and we are thus inclined to miss the political significance that underlay their utterance. We forget that so soon as the mercantile marine became a recognised burden on the navy, the main lines of commerce became also the main lines of naval strategy, and the crossing of the trade routes its focal points. Thus, although strategists, for the purpose of commending their views to the public and the Treasury, naturally wrote in terms of commerce, we must never forget that what they were really aiming at was the command of the sea by the domination of the great trade routes and the acquisition of focal points as naval stations.

Before ever Blake had entered the Mediterranean we see the process at work. It will be remembered that when, in 1650, he was alone before Lisbon, he had requisitioned out of the Portuguese Brazil fleet some English merchantmen to strengthen his blockading squadron. These vessels he and Popham subsequently sent home as being unfit in their opinion for active operations with the navy ships. This was in September. On the last day of October Parliament passed an act for adding fifteen per cent. to the customs, and directing that the money so raised should be used in defraying the cost of regular men-of-war to convoy merchantmen, and early in December Captain Hall was appointed to command a squadron for

convoy duty to the Mediterranean. The immediate cause of this memorable departure was the reckless way in which the French were making use of the Stuart flag to prey on British commerce. At the time the act was passed it was said that French privateers had captured or destroyed five thousand tons of English shipping, together with some four hundred guns and cargoes valued at half a million. It is true the contra side of the account was mounting up rapidly since general reprisals had been authorised, but it was clear the force of private merchantmen, which had so long sufficed, would no longer serve against the growing excellence of the French men-of-war.

Thus, when Penn was ordered to supersede Blake, he was given to understand that a second division would follow him under Hall in a month or two. The understanding was apparently that Hall was to regard himself as under Penn's flag, with the restriction that Penn was to have no power to divert Hall's ships from their special convoy duties in the Mediterranean. As we have seen, the final instructions which Penn received before sailing had been largely modified. Instead of superseding Blake he was merely ordered to attempt the capture of a second Brazil fleet, which the Government knew was on its way home. In view of Blake's blockade of Lisbon they expected that the Portuguese authorities would stop the ships at the Azores. At the Azores, therefore, Penn was ordered to take up his station. He was given to understand that his further instructions would be sent to him at Vigo in Galicia, and whether or not he was able to intercept his quarry, he was to be at Vigo without fail by the end of December.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Popham and Deane to Penn, November 10, 1650; *Welbeck MSS.* ii. 70. In the same volume is a rough extract of his journal, which, with the fuller extracts in Penn's *Life of Penn*, i. 317 *et seq.*, is the chief authority for his long cruise.

He had but four frigates with him, for these were all that could be spared from the Irish and Western squadrons which he had been commanding. Captain Jordan, now one of the most trusted of the Commonwealth's officers, was to bring him out for a flagship the recently launched 'Fairfax' so soon as she was ready for sea. So well timed was his sailing that, even before he reached his station, he fell in with and captured a Brazil ship. To his deep chagrin, however, it proved to be only a straggler from the main fleet of sixty-three sail, and he knew it must have already passed the islands. To retrieve his ill-luck he was for immediately giving chase, but an obstinate easterly wind held him to the Azores. A fortnight later the 'Fairfax' and a small frigate found him still windbound. Nor was it till the first week in February that he was able to stand over for the Portuguese coast. Not having been able to reach Vigo by the appointed time, he had not received any further instructions, but he expected to get them from Hall's division, which was now due to join. As he approached the coast he spoke a Dutch convoy homeward bound from Cadiz, and then, to his great surprise, he learnt for the first time that neither Blake nor any of his fleet were on the station. He was believed to have gone home, leaving four of his fleet to watch the Tagus.

Meanwhile, as we know, Blake had reached England to report his success. But even before his arrival the Government had learnt that the Princes had been wintering in Toulon under French protection. Upon this, Blake's brother Benjamin was hurried out in the 'Assurance,' in company with Captain Ball in the 'Adventure,' to reinforce Penn and to order him to immediately carry his squadron into the Straits and deal with Rupert. These urgent instructions the two frigate captains left at the appointed rendezvous at Vigo, and, not finding Penn

there, they passed down the coast and cruised in company before Lisbon.<sup>1</sup> Here Penn arrived in search of Robert Blake and his fleet on February 21, and spoke the 'Assurance,' but Benjamin Blake did not know or did not choose to tell the purport of the orders he had brought out, and Penn had to send back to Vigo to fetch them. Two days later he fell in with the 'Adventure,' and from Captain Ball he learned for the first time that he was not to supersede Blake, but to act under his orders ('for which,' he said handsomely, 'I am not sorry'). Subject to Blake's orders, however, he was given liberty to cruise as far as Gibraltar and Malaga.

It was evident that these instructions must have been penned before it was known that Blake was returning home. They clearly contemplated the two admirals acting in concert, which was now impossible. Penn was consequently in doubt, under the changed conditions, whether he ought to enter the Straits or to take Blake's place on the Portuguese coast. His desire was certainly to remain where he was; but on the morrow Hall appeared with his division in charge of the Levant convoy, and the instructions he brought made it clear to Penn that while Hall went up the Straits with the convoy, he himself was also to enter the Mediterranean in search of Rupert. He could no longer doubt that this was the effect of the orders that had been left at Vigo, and after a short consultation he decided to uncover Lisbon, and go down to Cadiz to revictual and clean for the chase.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Gibson, in his 'Reminiscences' (Gardiner, *Dutch War*, p. 17), says he was cruising four months in Benjamin Blake's ship before Penn appeared. This would make him sail from England in September 1650, but we know the order to commission the two frigates was not issued till November 15 (*Dom. Cal. Commonwealth*, ii. 500). The two frigates probably sailed in December, so as to reach Vigo at the end of the month, when Penn was expected to be there.

Thus reluctantly he had forced upon him the honour of conducting the first true Mediterranean squadron. His disapproval of the move he could not conceal, but whether his objections were purely strategical may be doubted. As a sailor admiral his mind worked still in the old grooves which Drake at his best had vainly tried to break up. He was wedded to the false but profitable game of commerce destruction, and he did not scruple to say so. True, in acknowledging his orders he based his objections on the fact that Lisbon was almost reduced to famine by the blockade, and practically at his mercy; but it was on prizes that his mind was harping. 'Already,' he lamented, 'we have seized more vessels than we have been days before it, and I am confident that in one month we should have taken as many as we could well have manned.' Smarting under the disappointment of having so narrowly missed the Brazil fleet, he seemed incapable of appreciating the wider strategy of the Council of State or to see there was higher game stirring. Still, orders had to be obeyed, and for Penn it must at least be said that he obeyed them loyally.

By March 1 he was in Cadiz, busy refitting his fleet. Hall had also put in there with his convoy, and before such a display of force the Spaniards were more than ever polite. 'Your fleets meeting here,' wrote Hall in his despatch, 'so soon after the departure of the other [that is, Blake's] is of no less admiration to other foreign kingdoms (into which reports fly to them daily) than to Spain, who much admire your quickness in such strength and fresh supplies. So as I believe in a short time the Spaniards, between fear and love, will grow respectful to us, though hitherto we have had little sign of it, more than compliments which we fail not to equalise them in.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Penn, i. 325-330.

On March 13 Hall passed on his way up the Straits with his convoy, but it was not till the end of the month that Penn had his whole squadron ready, and on the 29th he entered the Mediterranean with eight sail, 'intending,' as he wrote, '(with God's assistance) to find Prince Rupert out, and endeavour the destroying of him and his adherents.'

In Toulon the Princes had succeeded in refitting the 'Reformation' and 'Swallow' and two other vessels, and in persuading another English captain to join their flag. Mazarin had found it necessary to go back from Richelieu's policy, and the exigencies of his struggle with the great feudal families had forced him to conciliate one of them by granting the office of Grand Master of Navigation to the Duc de Vendôme. To him Rupert applied for assistance and received permission freely to use the port and its stores in return for the money realised by the sale of his prizes. This permission, however, was accompanied by a curious change in Rupert's line of action which is highly significant. 'His Highness,' says his chronicler, after relating what had passed at Toulon, 'seeing himself reduced to three sail, strained the utmost of his treasure and bought another, which was named the "Honest Seaman," and being but weak in ships endeavoured to be strong in men. Before his levy was perfect an English gentleman called Captain Craven, who had a ship at Marseilles, took commission under his Highness, and joined with the fleet, which, being at anchor with the rest of his fleet, was named the "Loyal Subject." Thus, with a squadron of five ships, conceiving all disasters past, he fixed his resolution to take revenge on the Spaniard.'<sup>1</sup>

Of this determination no explanation is given. Instead of continuing to strike directly at English commerce, he

<sup>1</sup> Warburton, iii. 323.

had apparently resolved to deal with the Spaniards for giving the regicides liberty of their ports, as Blake had dealt with the Portuguese for receiving the cavalier fleet. The seamen seem to have been clearly under the impression that they were to wage war on Spain, and this is perhaps why he succeeded in filling up his crews so well. British sailors were always poor politicians. They did not like fighting their own countrymen, whatever the cause, but were always ready enough to fight Spaniards, especially as that way plunder was the easiest come by. Rupert's aim, however, did not end there. It was far more ambitious. He had secretly made up his mind that, after obtaining all he could on the Spanish coast, he would go out to the West Indies. There he intended to support the British colonies that still recognised the King, and so rekindle the war from that distant base. But so soon as he opened his mind to his companies he found them strongly opposed to any such course, and bent on remaining in Spanish waters. It is clear, then, that the declared objective of the little squadron when it sailed was Spanish commerce, and it is quite possible that it was on this understanding that Rupert received permission to use the Toulon dockyard. Mazarin, since the battle of Dunbar, had nearly lost hope of the royal cause, and though he could not bring himself to adopt the advice of his agent in England and recognise the Commonwealth, he was doing his best to stop the disastrous reprisals in which the two countries were engaged at sea. The sailing of Penn's fleet can only have increased his anxiety to come to terms. It was followed by the alarming news that Philip had forestalled him in recognising the Commonwealth, and he was warned by his agents that England was on the brink of entering into an offensive alliance with Spain. At the same time he was still losing ground

to the Spaniards in the Mediterranean, and nothing seems more likely than that the condition of the assistance that was given to Rupert was that he was to use his force in weakening Spain, and not in giving further provocation to the Commonwealth.

Whether or not some such condition had been exacted from Rupert, it is clear he had little intention of abiding by it. When he sailed in the spring he steered to the eastward, giving out that his destination was the Levant. This was all the information of his movements that Penn was able to pick up when, after failing to find him among the Balearic islands and capturing a few French prizes, he too proceeded to the eastward. On May 1 he had heard from the Governor of Minorca that Rupert had been ready for sea some three weeks past. He therefore made for Sardinia as the best chance of getting in contact with him, and of falling in with the French privateers who had taken to lying there for the English Levant traders. At Cagliari there was still no news of the chase, and all he could learn was that the King of France had engaged to lend the Princes three ships. For ten days he cruised between Sardinia and the Barbary coast, till, having assured himself his enemy had not passed eastward, he resolved to bear up along the east side of Sardinia and Corsica and lie off Toulon. In this way he made sure he would lay hold of some French man-of-war and get more certain information of Rupert's course. Subsequently he decided to put into Leghorn on his way, in order to communicate with the British Consul there, and the very day he arrived, May 25, a galley came in from Toulon bringing the Consul letters to the effect that Rupert with his five vessels and a fire-ship had sailed on the 7th, the same day that Penn had reached Sardinia.

So soon therefore as he had watered and sent off his

despatches to the Council of State, he ran back southward, and after setting apart a Friday 'to seek the Lord in public,' he took up his station off Trapani at the western end of Sicily. There for a whole month he cruised in the narrows of the Mediterranean between Bizerta, Malta, and the Sicilian coast. Several valuable prizes were his reward, the richest of which, a 200-ton ship of 18 guns from Marseilles, full of treasure, he captured in a calm. The way in which it was done deserves recording as a testimony to the versatility of Penn and his officers. There being no wind to overhaul the chase, three of the frigates were fitted with oar-ports between the guns, and thus temporarily turned into vessels of free movement. In this way he was able, with the help of the boats towing, to overhaul and capture his prize. This feat was all the more satisfactory, for it was afterwards found that in a good breeze she could outsail any of the English vessels by a main-top sail.<sup>1</sup> But of the Princes he could hear nothing. Nor was it till the end of July that he knew his prayers and his activity had been alike unavailing. Putting into Messina, he found letters awaiting him from the Consul at Leghorn, saying that the Princes had been seen off Cadiz. The fact was, Rupert's easterly course had been a mere ruse, but it had succeeded in outwitting Penn. Rupert had never passed to the eastward of Corsica at all, but had run directly down to the African coast just when the false intelligence he had spread had made Penn move to Sardinia out of his way. Stealing westward along the Barbary shore, while Penn was running north to Leghorn and Hall was far up to the eastward, he had quietly cleared the Straits without hindrance. Then, after trying in vain to light on a Spanish prize on the Andalusian coast, he had held off to Madeira out of harm's way.

<sup>1</sup> Penn, *Life of Penn*, ii. App. M.

Thus, though Penn's chase had failed in its main object, he had successfully covered the Levant trade and had driven Rupert out of the Mediterranean. It was all that was needed. Out on the ocean it was impossible for such a squadron as Rupert's to live long. By shipwreck, disease, and disaffection his force began inevitably to melt away, and though he did eventually reach the West Indies he was never again a real danger. The whole episode, in fact, was a kind of foretaste of Nelson's duel with Villeneuve, and Rupert's move to the West Indies proved as disastrous to the Royalist cause at sea as did Villeneuve's to that of Napoleon. Unlike Nelson, Penn did not take the strong step of leaving his station in pursuit, but like him he moved to the Straits. On his way he fell in with part of the Dutch Mediterranean squadron and received from the officer in command the deliberately false information that on June 30 he had seen Rupert's squadron off the Lizard heading up Channel. The news was not credited, and as there were rumours that the French Newfoundland fish fleet was coming into the Mediterranean, Penn decided to hold the Straits to waylay it. A fortnight later he received news of the 'crowning mercy' at Worcester by which Cromwell had given the death-blow to the Royalist cause. Rupert was therefore less than ever a danger, but at home the Princes were still believed to be on the Spanish coast, and with the good news Penn received orders from the Council of State that he was to devote himself to their destruction. A few days later he obtained information that they were at the Azores, but still he clung to Gibraltar, being sure they must sooner or later make their way back. Moreover, by holding the Straits he had the best chance of making prizes. Throughout the whole campaign this idea of the object of naval warfare had never ceased to confuse his judgment.

But in view of the intelligence he had of the unseaworthiness of Rupert's best ships and of the fact that a squadron under Ayscue had been ordered to the West Indies, it is difficult to say his decision was not right. He must at least be credited with the tenacity of the convictions which fastened him to the station he had chosen all through the winter, and the skill with which he disposed his squadron, both night and day, so that, as his son wrote, 'few ships went into the Straits but they were spoken with if friends, or taken if enemies.'<sup>1</sup>

At the end of November intelligence reached him that the 'Reformation,' the best of Rupert's ships, had been lost at the Azores with all hands. Thereupon, feeling justified at last in dividing his force, he resolved in council of war to detach three frigates westward to complete the Princes' destruction. With the rest of his force it was decided he should remain on guard where he was, and there he remained till the end of January 1652, when Badiley, in charge of the Levant convoy, arrived with a fresh squadron to relieve him. So the memorable cruise of the first true Mediterranean squadron came to an end, and early in February Penn cleared from Cadiz, homeward bound, having faithfully guarded the Levant trade, and with thirty-six prizes to his credit.

<sup>1</sup> Penn, ii. App. M.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE DUTCH WAR WITHIN THE STRAITS

MEANWHILE the Mediterranean policy of the two northern republics had been developing. The foregoing narrative will show that, although Hall's division had been definitely sent to protect commerce in the Mediterranean, Penn's presence there was to some extent an accident. When he sailed he had no orders for entering the Straits, and it was not till off Lisbon he met his fresh instructions to 'enlarge his quarters,' as he said, in consequence of Rupert's movements, that he thought of quitting the Atlantic. Since that time events had occurred which deeply emphasised the expediency of maintaining a permanent Mediterranean fleet. The heartburnings which for years had been accumulating between the English and the Dutch at sea were now increasing in intensity. In the course of their reprisals on the French the English officers exerted the undoubted right—as international law then was—to search Dutch vessels for French goods. This claim the Dutch, whose most profitable trade had always been in troubled waters, persistently refused to admit, and while Penn was lying in the Straits on the look-out for the French Newfoundland fleet, in which were many Dutch vessels, it almost came to blows. The Dutch southern squadron was about the Straits under Van Galen, one of the toughest and most strong-handed officers in the States' service—a veteran who had spent a strenuous lifetime in fighting Spaniards and corsairs.

He had his ships dispersed for cruising, and one of them under Cornelis Tromp, son of the great admiral, fell in with Penn. Tromp at once divined what the English game was, and promptly passed the word for a concentration. The intention certainly was to force Penn to leave the Newfoundland fleet alone, and it was only by the British admiral's tact and diplomacy that a serious conflict was avoided.

That the Dutch were able to take this high line was due to a recent and unprecedented development in their naval policy. When in 1648 the Peace of Westphalia brought the Thirty Years' War to a conclusion, their fleet was not reduced as usual to a bare peace footing. Owing to their strained relations with the Commonwealth and the increasing display of English power in the Mediterranean, more serious precautions were thought necessary. It had been resolved therefore that the admiralties of the various provinces should keep at sea a permanent force of forty sail for the protection of Dutch commerce. But, as the tension increased, even this was not considered sufficient. In the spring of 1651, after Penn and Hall had begun their operations, it was decided to practically double the existing establishment. On May 16 the States General called upon the various admiralties to furnish their respective quotas of an additional force of thirty-five sail, and a complete system of commerce protection was laid down. Five ships and fifteen frigates were to cruise from the Skager Rack to Gibraltar, covering the whole North Sea and Atlantic coasts; and the rest, being twelve ships and three frigates, or half the effective force of the new fleet, were to serve in the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup>

The English Government replied with a corresponding

<sup>1</sup> *Dutch War*, i. 57; ii. 22, 25.

addition to their own convoy squadrons. Hall had come home, but he had been replaced by another frigate squadron under a certain Captain Henry Appleton with Badiley for his second in command, and acting in two divisions they had been constantly employed throughout the year in convoying merchantmen from place to place over the whole extent of the Mediterranean. To this force at the end of the year was added the last new ship of the Commonwealth, which, as a symbol of their increasing power, had been named the 'Worcester,' after their late triumph. With a small frigate as a tender she was ordered, under Captain Charles Thorowgood, on convoy duty, and to the particular service of redeeming slaves at Algiers. Not content even with this provision the Navy Committee reported that twenty-six more vessels should be brought forward for commerce protection, which would bring up the total to the number of those specially voted by the Dutch. On this report Parliament voted on January 14, 1652, that a permanent squadron not exceeding twelve sail was to be kept continually in the Mediterranean, and a system of reliefs arranged so that every quarter three or four ships should be sent home with convoys and be replaced by a similar number of fresh ones taking out outward-bound vessels. For this purpose the navy officers were authorised to commission thirty-eight sail. The English Mediterranean squadron would thus be in a numerical inferiority of three to the Dutch, whose squadron was to be fifteen; but it may be presumed that the English Government, owing to the general superiority of their ships, regarded these twelve as equal in force to the Dutch fifteen.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the rest of the Dutch permanent fleet, they were of course more or less balanced by the powerful Summer and Winter Guards that were

<sup>1</sup> *Dutch War (Navy Records Society)*, i. 61 *et seq.*

always kept in the Narrow Seas, and charged with the ordinary convoy service of the Bay of Biscay and the North Sea and Baltic ports.

The English position had been further secured by the reduction of the Scilly Islands. There Sir John Grenville, grandson of the famous Sir Richard of the 'Revenge,' had managed to maintain himself under the Stuart flag. But the place had sunk into a mere nest of pirates, and in the spring of 1651 the Dutch, who had suffered as much as any one else, threatened to seize it. Tromp actually declared war on Grenville; but Blake was hurried to the scene with Ayscue's squadron, which was on the point of sailing for the West Indies, and quickly forced Grenville to surrender. Before the year was out the Isle of Man, Jersey, and Guernsey had shared the fate of Scilly. Thus at a stroke the Dutch were deprived of any hope they entertained of establishing a naval station in English waters, and the last blow was given to the Stuart sea power which at one time had threatened so seriously the very existence of the Commonwealth.

Another change must be noted. In August, while the resources and energy of the Commonwealth were strained to the utmost to meet the new danger caused by Charles II.'s reception in Scotland, Popham, who with the Channel Guard was watching to prevent any communication between the continent and the King at Stirling, suddenly died. In spite of the anxiety of the time, his body was brought up from Dover and buried at Westminster with all the pomp and solemnity of which the Republic was capable. Blake, to give him comparative rest after all his exertions, had been sent to Plymouth to watch the West. Deane was tied to Cromwell's army, preparing the flotilla for the masterly turning movement across the Forth which finally forced Charles from his

impregnable position at Stirling. So Blake had to be hastily summoned from his rest and sent to sea again with the Channel Guard. Thus to all intents, on the eve of the great struggle with the Dutch, he became virtually sole naval Commander-in-Chief.

This then was the situation when, in the first days of February 1652, news reached Holland that Ayscue had seized in the West Indies the whole of the Dutch ships to the number of twenty-seven which he had found there trading in contravention of the English Act of October 3, 1650, forbidding commerce with the Royalist colonies. The Dutch merchants, seeing their West Indian trade threatened with destruction, petitioned that Vice-Admiral Jan Evertsen, who commanded the Northern division of the permanent squadron cruising from the North Sea down to Finisterre, should be reinforced and the Mediterranean squadron ordered to join him. He would then be able to intercept Ayscue's home-coming fleet and protect the outgoing West Indian merchantmen. About a fortnight later, on February 22, the States General issued the heroic order that the admiralties were to equip and arm no fewer than one hundred and fifty ships over and above those already at sea in order to protect their commerce. Fifty of these were to be got to sea immediately, and the rest as soon as might be. It was not in the nature of the Commonwealth to let their enemies arm in peace. Three days later they confirmed Blake as sole Commander-in-Chief for a period of nine months. The Council of State duly made out his commission, deciding at the same time to defer the consideration of a person to fill Popham's vacant place, and immediately sent him down to Deptford, Woolwich, and Chatham to find out why the Summer Guard was not yet ready for sea. Reprimands went singing into every one's ears; the

'Sovereign of the Seas' (cut down a deck) and the 'Prince' (renamed the 'Resolution'), the two glories of the Caroline navy, were ordered into commission; the whole country was ransacked for guns; and Penn, who was just arriving from the Mediterranean with his four best ships, was ordered to keep them still at sea, and was subsequently selected by Blake for his vice-admiral. In April both Blake and Tromp were out, and on May 19 occurred the memorable conflict between them over the honour of the flag. Parliament immediately ordered forty more ships to be manned and armed, and began still more drastic reprisals on Dutch commerce. The bitter rivalry between the seamen of the two countries, which had been growing in acrimony ever since the English enabled the Dutch to become a sea power, had come to a head at last. All negotiations were in vain, and on the last day of June the Dutch envoys took their leave of Parliament, and the first of the great Dutch wars had begun.

Thus at its outset the growth of the English power in the Mediterranean received a check. The system of reliefs which had recently been established was thrown out of gear, and Appleton and Badiley, who were in command of the two divisions of the Mediterranean squadron under the new organisation, were left to shift for themselves. Not that the English Government at first had any idea of abandoning the position they had taken up. The total number of ships voted for the year 1652 was two hundred and fifty besides fire-ships. From this great fleet three squadrons were to be detached for particular service in protecting commerce. A squadron of twenty sail was to proceed to the North; another, of thirty sail, was to guard the mouth of the Channel; while a third, also of thirty sail, was to go down to the Straits.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Penn's *Life of Penn*, i. 430.

For the men to whose arduous lot it fell to keep the English flag flying in the Mediterranean the situation happened at the moment to be singularly unfavourable. The squadron was not only particularly weak, but was very unfortunately disposed. Appleton, who had been busy during the winter and spring convoying merchantmen all over the Levant, was in Leghorn with the 'Leopard' (48) and the 'Bonaventure' (44). The 'Constant Warwick' (32), the third vessel of his division, was in Genoa. Leghorn, the Grand Duke of Tuscany's principal port, had become the chief trading centre of those seas, and here the Commonwealth had practically established the headquarters of the Mediterranean squadron by appointing a navy agent. The man chosen was Charles Longland, a merchant who had displayed much resource and activity in supplying Penn with stores and intelligence during his late cruise against Rupert. It is a name that deserves remembrance. He was a man of the type to which England has owed so much. A mere successful Italian merchant, suddenly called to State affairs, he immediately developed a courageous energy and diplomatic ability that were equalled only by the remarkable intuition for the broad conditions of naval power which his despatches exhibit. Appointed in November 1651, when the Commonwealth had determined on a continuous Mediterranean policy, he had already succeeded in obtaining from the Grand Duke extraterritorial rights in his port for English navy ships—a privilege which practically amounted to the recognition of the Commonwealth. He also secured their free access to the port for careening and supply, and thus provided the squadron with a base.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Longland to Navy Committee and enclosures, April 19, 1652 (*Domestic Calendar*, p. 221). The Calendar contains the series of despatches from Longland and the naval officers on which the following narrative is mainly

Badiley had already been able to use it. In March he had entered the Straits with the 'Paragon' (52), the 'Phoenix' and 'Elizabeth' (two 36-gun frigates), and a smaller one, the 'Nightingale' (24). Passing up the Spanish coast, he had driven the French war-ships before him into Toulon and taken his convoy safely to Genoa and Leghorn. Then, in the usual course, he had passed on to the far Levant and was now at Smyrna, about to sail on his return voyage. Thus it happened that at the critical moment the two English squadrons were as widely divided as they could well be.

To make matters worse, the Dutch were unusually concentrated. Their admiral Katz had assembled a force of fourteen sail, and was engaged in making a demonstration before Toulon. Its object is difficult to determine. Toulon for some time past had been in a disaffected condition; but, though Marseilles had thrown in her lot with the Fronde, the naval port was still nominally loyal, and Frenchmen on the Italian exchanges gave out that Katz was come to secure it effectively in the interests of the French King. The suspicion that Mazarin's hand was in it was plausible enough. At the moment his chief need was for naval assistance. During the years when he had been powerful at sea, he had wrested from Spain her chief Flemish ports, Gravelines, Mardyke, and finally Dunkirk. But now the tables were turned. Gravelines was already recovered. Dunkirk was closely besieged by a Spanish army, and the Duc de Vendôme, the new 'Grand Master,' was straining every nerve to carry relief to it from Brest. Barcelona, which was still in French hands, was in much the same based. But it must be noted that Longland's are wrongly placed. On comparing his despatches with Appleton's and Badiley's, it is clear Longland, in the Italian manner, used new style dates, and they therefore must be taken to have been written ten days earlier than appears in the Calendar.

case, and Mazarin was trying to get a squadron equipped in the Mediterranean to reinforce Vendôme at Brest and to relieve Barcelona on the way.

This service was committed to a certain Chevalier de la Ferrière, an officer of the port of Toulon, who in 1649 had used the force then at his command to seize and destroy the London Levant Company's fleet, and was regarded by English merchants as the arch-thief of the Mediterranean. Longland had been urging the Council of State to send a squadron to reinforce their strength within the Straits, and suggested that it might begin operations by destroying La Ferrière's fleet on its way to Barcelona in retribution for his depredations on English commerce. English naval officers, as we know, had already extended their reprisals against ships belonging to the French Crown, and, in view of the critical condition of his affairs, Mazarin may well have welcomed any counterbalancing factor which might hamper English action on the Provençal coast. Nothing came of Longland's bold idea; but, in view of what afterwards occurred, it is important to bear in mind that this method of bringing the French to reason by a stunning blow had been suggested to the Council of State from the Mediterranean as early as the spring of 1652.<sup>1</sup>

There was, however, another explanation of the Toulon demonstration very different from that given by the French. Dutchmen affirmed that Katz was there to demand redress. There can be no doubt the Dutch had suffered as much from the seizure of Spanish goods in their vessels by the French as they had done from the seizure of French and Portuguese goods by the English, and the Dutch merchants in Italy gave out that, in default of justice being done, their admiral had commission for reprisals on

<sup>1</sup> See *post*, p. 255.

French ships. But, as week after week went by and nothing definite was done, Longland came to the shrewd conclusion that Katz's action would depend on the result of the negotiations which were then in progress between London and the Hague. Almost from the first he smelt mischief, and he had never ceased to urge upon the home Government the need of reinforcing their Mediterranean squadron. As news of the strained relations with the Dutch reached him, his anxiety increased, and he decided with Appleton that he had better not put to sea till Badiley rejoined. On June 18 he heard of Blake's collision with Tromp, just a month after it occurred, and immediately sent off to warn Badiley at Smyrna of the coming storm. Ten days later it burst. On that day Katz, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral of Holland, appeared with his whole squadron before Leghorn, and Appleton and his rich convoy were caught. In serious alarm he began unloading his more precious goods. Katz threatened to attack if he did not desist, but the Tuscan Governor held firm and Katz stayed his hand. As the Dutch were still vehemently striving in London to avert the war their lawlessness had brought upon them, it is probable that Katz had no definite orders to use violence, and moreover the redoubtable Van Galen was on his way out overland to supersede him. None knew the ground better than he, and it was not a year since he had crowned his reputation by forcing a treaty on Salee.<sup>1</sup>

Longland was at his wit's end. It was not only Van Galen, but serious reinforcements that the Dutch were expecting. He feared, too, the French might join them. As it was, even if Badiley succeeded in rejoining Appleton, the British force would be far too weak to do anything, and he redoubled his importunity for more ships. His

<sup>1</sup> *Vie de Corneille Tromp*, 1694.

efforts were supported by the powerful Levant Company at home. But the Admiralty was up to its eyes as it was. Blake, regardless of Tromp, had gone North with the main fleet to destroy the Dutch fishing flotilla, and not a ship could be spared. They suggested that the Levant Company should fit out war ships of their own under the letters of marque which had been already granted them after La Ferrière's destruction of their fleet. They replied they were too poor after all their losses from the French depredations in the Mediterranean, and, insisting on the new conception of commerce protection, suggested that the State should hire their ships that were out there, and fit them as men-of-war at the public expense. And this was all that could be done.

Meanwhile things at Leghorn remained at a deadlock. The Grand Duke would not allow the Dutch to attack, and Appleton could not stir. On August 22 Van Galen arrived; Badiley was also daily expected. It was well that the English had such a man to face the Dutch veteran. Like Longland, he was a man typical of his time. All through the days of his manhood, when Levant traders were expected to look after themselves, he had commanded a little ship called the 'Advance,' with a crew of only fifty-four hands, and three times at various points in the Mediterranean—once in 1637, once in 1640, and again in 1644—he had fought single-handed and heavily beaten powerful Barbary squadrons that had attacked him.<sup>1</sup> When the Parliament was setting out to establish its sea power he had been given the command of the 'Happy Entrance' after its return to its allegiance, and while commanding her had planned and carried through the destruction of the 'Antelope,' which Rupert had been

<sup>1</sup> See his Lieutenant John Steele's affidavit and Badiley's *Answer to Appleton's Remonstrance*, p. 90, *Brit. Mus. E.* 1952 9).

forced to leave behind in Helvoetsluys. Since then, as we know, he had had further experience as Blake's rear-admiral on the coast of Portugal. Still, bold and resourceful as he was, he was no match for Van Galen in strategy or fleet tactics. All he could do, and well he did it, was to uphold the honour of his flag.

The moment Van Galen took over the command, all was astir. Leaving six vessels to watch Appleton in Leghorn, he himself immediately put to sea to intercept Badiley and prevent any co-operation with his colleague. For two days he kept in sight, and then disappeared to the west. Cox, who commanded the 'Constant Warwick' in Genoa, was promptly ordered to follow and ascertain his movements, with instruction that, if he found Van Galen making to the eastward, he was to go with all speed to Messina and on to Zante to meet Badiley. Whether Van Galen deceived Cox, or whether the latter was anxious to get away from Appleton's control, to Zante he went, and, the day after he had sailed, Van Galen reappeared before Leghorn.<sup>1</sup> Appleton was deeply aggrieved, but there can be no doubt that Cox's resolve to get to sea was for the best, though he certainly disobeyed orders. It was a serious misfortune that Appleton, besides being ill, was a thoroughly incompetent and unenterprising officer; he was now less inclined than ever to move; nor could Longland, having as yet no order to show, induce the captains of the Levant Company's ships to put their hand to the work. Thus Van Galen's dispositions were not so much as disturbed, and Badiley was left without assistance.

Cox met him at Zante, and informed him that he had left Van Galen steering westward. Badiley immediately resolved, instead of taking his convoy by way of Messina

<sup>1</sup> Appleton to Navy Committee, *S.P. Dom.* xxiv. 89, July 23, 1652.

and Naples, the usual route by which Van Galen would expect him, to proceed direct to Leghorn. He had, even with the 'Constant Warwick,' but four men-of-war in company, besides the four Levant merchantmen of his convoy, against Van Galen's fourteen at the least. The odds were heavy against him, but he meant to try. English seamen proverbially underestimated the fighting powers of the Dutch, and if the merchantmen and Appleton only played their parts there was no reason why he should not cut his way through, in case, after all, he found Van Galen still off Leghorn. But from the intelligence which Cox had given him, Badiley was inclined to believe that Van Galen's design was to double back to the eastward, and lie in wait for him about the southern cape of Sardinia, and not near Leghorn. Thus, by following the course he had in his mind, and passing inside Sardinia and Corsica, he hoped to elude Van Galen altogether, and join hands with Appleton without interruption.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, as we know, his intelligence was incorrect, and Van Galen continued to keep up the delusion. A week or so after he had reappeared at Leghorn he again put to sea with ten sail as though he were going to Toulon. Some said it was to fetch four fresh ships that had been equipped for him there; others that he was going to blockade the place, which was now in open revolt, while the King attacked it from the land side.<sup>2</sup> Longland was not deceived, and, in despair of a junction being effected, was hoping as late as August 22 that Badiley was waiting at Messina till the fleet that was expected from England arrived. As a matter of fact Van Galen was still somewhere off Leghorn, and apparently

<sup>1</sup> Badiley's despatch, Aug. 31, *S.P. Domestic*, xxiv. 125, i.

<sup>2</sup> Longland to Council of State, August 9-19, 1652, *ibid.* xxiv. 107.

fully aware of Badiley's movements. About the 26th he moved southward with his ten sail, leaving only four and an armed merchantman just joined to blockade Appleton, and it was at this time that Badiley was stealing up inside the islands. Next day, as he was passing Monte Christo, the two fleets sighted one another. About four o'clock they engaged, but a calm and nightfall put an end to the action before it had grown serious. 'There was not above four or five hundred pieces of ordnance spent on both sides,' wrote Badiley, 'and we had suffered but little.' Next morning Badiley was discovered to have been making his way towards Monte Christo, and three of the Dutch ships had fallen so far to leeward that Van Galen did not renew the attack till noon. The Dutch had apparently been reinforced by one ship from before Leghorn, and, so soon as their rearguard had closed up, Van Galen bore down with his whole weight.

Then all that long summer day raged a fight which each side agreed was the hottest within memory. To the Dutch Badiley appeared to have awaited their attack with his navy ships disposed in a half-moon, but he himself says that, according to the usual English practice, he had ordered his captains to fall astern of him and to engage at musket range. His order, however, was not properly obeyed even by the navy ships. Cox in the 'Constant Warwick'—an officer whose courage was as fierce and reckless as his temper—alone took and kept his station, and on him and Badiley fell the heat of the action. The Levant ships took hardly any part at all, but made their way safely and with all speed into Porto Longone in Elba, while Badiley held Van Galen. Owing to the failure of his captains to support him the Dutch were able to concentrate on the two leading ships, but all day long they held their own. 'By my gunner's account,' Badiley

tells, 'we discharged from this ship eight hundred pieces of great ordnance that day, which must have done no small execution, having sometimes two of the enemy's best men-of-war aboard; and their Admiral, Vice-Admiral, and Rear-Admiral, with all the rest, sometimes within pistol- and musket-shot of us.' Once he was boarded, and so hot was the reception that his adversary cried for quarter, but he was too hard pressed to take possession. Van Galen himself led the attack, but was soon forced to fall away with the loss of seventeen killed and twenty-seven dangerously wounded, and seven shot between wind and water. It was no wonder, for Badiley's method of fighting was severely English. Such was his fire discipline that he would not allow a single great gun to be discharged till he rang 'his ship's great bell,' with the result that his shot never missed, we are told, but tore great holes in the Dutchmen's sides and wrought havoc on board with the splinters.<sup>1</sup> Two or three ships took Van Galen's place, and Badiley was as hard put to it as ever. The 'Phoenix,' instead of keeping her station astern, had forged ahead, and when she tried to go about to his relief managed, though she was one of the smartest and handiest frigates in the service, to fall foul of a heavy Dutch ship, and having no forecastle for her men to retire to, was immediately taken.<sup>2</sup> 'There must have been great carelessness,' wrote Badiley, 'to say the least.' But he was so badly shut in that he could not move to her rescue. As evening fell, two of the enemy had lost their mainmasts, they had nearly two hundred killed, and, as the English Admiral said, 'they seemed out of breath.' There was cause enough. Bart and Swart, the two captains who had

<sup>1</sup> Gibson's 'Reminiscences,' Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 18. Gibson confirms Badiley's formation as being in line ahead by giving the order of the ships.

<sup>2</sup> See Captain Wadsworth's letter in Badiley's *Answer*, p. 90.

grappled Badiley, besides another called Haen, were killed; Van Boer, the vice-admiral, who had got across his bows to rake him, had been very severely handled; and Cornelis Tromp, who had followed his old chief to the Mediterranean, had to abandon his ship next day. The Dutch themselves admit they were forced to let go, and thus during the night, by the help of his oars and his boats, Badiley was able to follow his merchantmen.<sup>1</sup>

There was nothing else to do. The ammunition of all his captains was almost expended. In his own ship he had twenty-six killed and fifty-seven wounded, including all his chief officers. He had received in his hull some fifty shot, many of them between wind and water, and his rigging was cut to pieces. Yet he saved his ship and his convoy, and by daylight next morning all his squadron, except the 'Phoenix,' was in Porto Longone. The Dutch made a threat to follow, but a few shots from the Spanish batteries persuaded them to be content with the important victory they had won. Moreover, judging by the state of Badiley's shot lockers, their ammunition must have been no less exhausted, and, ill-manned as they were, their crews must have been decimated. Consequently no further attempt was made to molest the English vessels. At first Badiley did not realise the meaning of his defeat. He barely regarded it as such, and believed that, if the Spanish Governor of Porto Longone only held true to his neutrality, he could soon achieve some means of joining hands with Appleton.

Longland saw more clearly. He knew the man Appleton was, and knew how active Van Galen had been

<sup>1</sup> The details of the action are taken from Badiley's despatches in *S.P. Dom.* xxiv. 125, i., and from various letters and affidavits printed in Appleton's *Remonstrance*, and Badiley's *Answer*, and in *La Vie de Corneille Tromp*. Gibson also gives a picturesque account in his 'Reminiscences,' *ubi supra*.

to increase his force by arming merchantmen. When it was known at Leghorn that Van Galen and Badiley were in contact, Longland had urged Appleton as strongly as he could to put out and fight the four ships that were blockading him. But, although the Dutch crews all told did not outnumber those of his two navy ships, and though two of his convoy offered to join him, he would not stir, because, as he said, he was ill, nor would he suffer his officers to go without him. Had he tried, a junction might almost certainly have been effected in Porto Longone. As it was, all Longland could do was to use his best diplomatic means to secure the neutrality of Badiley's port of refuge. But that he knew was little enough. 'I hope,' he wrote to the Navy Committee, 'God has directed you to a better protection, without which this will soon vanish, for the enemy is master of the sea, by which way alone Captain Badiley's wants must be supplied. . . . Except this fleet of Dutch be destroyed there will be no trade for our nation in the Straits.'

As a matter of fact he need have been in no anxiety about Spanish neutrality; for already an event had happened which could only confirm Spain in her friendly attitude and by which France earned the reward of the piratical conduct of her officers in the Mediterranean. The naval situation at the moment was as follows. The bulk of the Spanish fleet under Don John of Austria was before Barcelona supporting the efforts of Philip's army to recover it from the French. The Chevalier de la Ferrière had got to sea with the Toulon squadron, but the force he had been able to raise was quite inadequate for the relief of Barcelona without the assistance of the Dutch; and, though there was no chance of this being given, they were being allowed in Provençal ports every

facility for furthering their efforts to drive the English out of the Mediterranean. The bulk of the French naval force was with Vendôme on the Atlantic seaboard. Having completed the organisation of his fleet in Brest, he had swept southward and driven from before Rochelle a combined squadron of Spaniards and French Frondeurs who were there to give countenance to its rebellion; and having thus secured his rear he had gone northward to relieve Dunkirk. On September 1 the fleet was driven into Dieppe by a gale, and three days later Vendôme, who had gone ashore, was roused from his bed with a message from the besieged port that unless relieved in three days it must capitulate. His larger ships were still under refit and unable to move, but he promptly sent to sea the whole of his transports and store ships under escort of eight of his smaller men-of-war. Next day, as they were passing Calais, they sighted Blake's fleet, supposed to be on the look-out for Tromp; but to their intense surprise he bore down on them, captured seven of the eight men-of-war and most of their convoy, and carried them to the English coast. Next day Dunkirk capitulated, and Spain had recovered all she had lost in the days when France had dominated the Mediterranean.

Blake's startling action had been suggested by the Spanish Ambassador. He had pointed out to the English Government the opportunity Vendôme's attempt would afford for pressing their reprisals upon the French King's own ships, since they too had been guilty of attacks upon English merchantmen within the Straits. To this day the French can only speak of it as a felony. But, by all the laws of war, a state of general reprisal existing, it was technically lawful, and in view of what was going on in the Mediterranean it is hard to deny its justice. For two years or more France had refused to recognise the

Commonwealth, and had treated it as a pirate power, whose commerce was fair game for any one. She had sheltered Rupert and saved him. At this very hour she was further tearing her pretended neutrality by allowing Van Galen openly to use her Provençal ports as a base of attack against the Commonwealth officers. By what right or reason could she complain? The blow was hard, but she brought it on her own head. Nor did it end there. Vendôme's concentration at Brest, which Blake had robbed of its fruit, had left Don John supreme in the Mediterranean. La Ferrière could effect nothing, and a month later Barcelona had shared the fate of Dunkirk.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Council of State expressly defended their attack on French navy ships on the ground that French navy ships had seized English merchantmen (Guizot, i. App. xx. 5, and Gardiner, *Commonwealth*, ii. 131). Dr. Gardiner at first was inclined to believe there was no evidence of this, but subsequently called attention to the complaint of the Levant Company in 1649 (*S.P. Dom.* p. 11) of injuries done them by the 'French Fleet within the Straits,' which he assumes must mean a fleet of the French royal navy. To this evidence we may add a despatch of Longland's of May 1-10, 1652, in which, in anticipation of Blake's action, he suggests attacking a fleet of French navy ships that 'are arming for the relief of Barcelona, and are commanded in chief by Captain Ferere' (i.e. La Ferrière), 'a famous thief that has done much mischief to our nation in burning the "Talent" and taking other ships, and now intends the like ruin to any of our ships' (*S.P. Dom.* xxiv. 11). La Ferrière, according to the editor of Mazarin's 'Letters,' is often mentioned in them 'comme chargé d'un commandement maritime à Toulon' (*Lettres de Mazarin*, v. 52, n.). The 'Talent' and her cargo were valued at 60,260*l.*, and on proof thereof the Council of State authorised the Admiralty Judges to issue letters of marque and reprisal to that amount on January 9, 1650. On the same day similar letters were authorised to two other firms, members of the Levant Company, for 9,838*l.* and 32,762*l.* (*Dom. Cal.* 554). Following this on April 25, when Popham was about to sail to join Blake off Lisbon, he was invested with powers of letters of marque, and instructed to seize 'such ships and vessels of the French King or any of his subjects as you shall think fit' (Thurloe, *St. P.* i. 144). The Levant Company, it appears, did not act on their letters of marque. When they complained of the blockade of their ships at Leghorn, they were asked why they had not done so, and they replied that they could not afford it 'in respect of our late and many losses by the French fleet' (*Dom. Cal.* 360). In view of the repeated use of this expression, and the fact that the Levant Company's ships were more than a match for any ordinary privateers, the conclusion is almost

The blow brought Mazarin at last to his senses; but while he was hastening his preparations to get an embassy over to recognise the Commonwealth, the Spanish Ambassador was doing his best that open war should come of it. It was no wonder then that all went well in Porto Longone, and that Badiley remained on excellent terms with the Spanish Governor. Under his wing communication between Elba and Leghorn was easy enough by way of the Spanish ports on the Tuscan coast. Longland came round to consult with Badiley, and Cox went to Leghorn to take over the command of the 'Bonaventure,' whose captain had just died. But nothing could be got out of Appleton, who remained as inert as ever. Instead of improving, the situation grew worse and worse. The Dutch being in command of the sea were able continually to increase their force by taking up merchantmen, and by the middle of September they had twenty sail available. To add insult to injury, they had brought the captured 'Phoenix' into Leghorn, and were busy careening and refitting her, under Appleton's nose, as an addition to their fleet. Longland tried to persuade Appleton to seize her, but he objected that it

irresistible, apart from the other evidence, that the damage had been done by the King's navy. But Colbert, in his minute on the subject drawn up in 1650, actually admits that this was so (Guizot, *Hist. de la Rép. Anglaise*, vol. i. App. xv.), and suggests two different grounds of excuse. The King's ships, he says, attacked English commerce, either when his officers were serving under a Stuart commission (and the King could not refuse his cousin leave to give such commissions); or else when serving under his own flag, but then only because the aggrieved merchantmen refused to submit to a search for Spanish goods. It is to be observed, however, that when Gentillot was sent over to negotiate an arrangement, although his instructions admit the attacks by French navy ships, they do not direct him to excuse them on the ground of resistance to 'the right of search.' This would look as though the facts would not bear out the defence Colbert had suggested (*ibid.* App. xvii. 465). It is noteworthy, moreover, that it was equally absent from Bordeaux's instructions and Louis XIV.'s letter of December 2, 1652 (*ibid.* 512-16).

would be a violation of the neutrality of the Grand Duke's port. Efforts were then made to follow the Dutch example and persuade the English merchant captains to prepare their vessels as men-of-war, but they still refused to take the responsibility unless he could show authority from the Government to take them up. So there was nothing to do but try to keep the Tuscan Government in a good temper till a relieving fleet arrived from England.

Owing to an epidemic at Genoa, communication with the North was very difficult, and it was not apparently till nearly six weeks after the action at Monte Christo that the Council of State heard of their Mediterranean officers' distress. They immediately ordered their thanks to be sent to Spain and to the Governor of Porto Longone, and Blake was directed to detach twenty ships from his fleet to rendezvous at Portsmouth and proceed to the Straits under the command of Captain Peacocke. Blake had just defeated De With and De Ruyter off the Kentish Knock, and it was believed the campaign was over for the year. So far the English had had almost uninterrupted success against the Dutch, and to all appearance a squadron for the Mediterranean might easily be spared. Blake by no means took this view, and kept urging the Government to keep him in fighting trim. So great, however, was their confidence and financial embarrassment that he pleaded in vain. The result was all that Blake feared. In a couple of months Tromp, who had been recalled to the command, was out again with the Bordeaux convoy, and finding Blake, as he passed down Channel, in greatly inferior strength, inflicted on him a sound defeat. Then at last the Government awoke to the gravity of the situation. Clearly every effort must be concentrated on regaining the command of the Channel, and Peacocke was promptly ordered to rejoin Blake's flag with his twenty ships.

Meanwhile Badiley, in ignorance as yet that he had been abandoned, had not been idle. At the end of October he had received an order six weeks old, appointing him Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, and he acted immediately. Having obtained permission from the friendly Governor to erect batteries ashore for the protection of his vessels, he made all snug, and then took a felucca to Leghorn. He had heard that the bulk of the Dutch fleet had sailed westward, leaving only six vessels to blockade the port, and he meant under his new authority to bring out the 'Leopard' and 'Bonaventure' at all costs. In the blockaded port he found all at a deadlock. The ships were not provisioned, and the officers were at loggerheads. Cox's temper could not brook Appleton's refusal to permit an attempt to recover the 'Phoenix,' and Appleton had dismissed him his ship. Longland was no less disgusted with the commodore's inertness, but Badiley soon made a change. Showing his new commission to Appleton, he restored Cox to his command, and ordered Longland to get two months' victuals into the navy ships; but before he was ready the Dutch had thirteen ships outside, and he could not move. So back again he went to Elba, convinced it was impossible for the two squadrons to effect a junction till help came from England, or at least until Longland had succeeded in a negotiation he had set on foot to get hold of some of the English private men-of-war that were in the Venetian service.

One step, however, he had taken before leaving Leghorn which was destined to have the gravest results. When he had first conceived the idea of cutting the 'Antelope' out of Helvoetsluys, the Earl of Warwick had assured him that no act of hostility would violate the neutrality of a foreign port provided no fire-arms were used to disturb it. There could, of course, be no higher

authority on such a point than the Lord High Admiral of England, and Badiley, to whom the sight of the 'Phoenix' being refitted by his enemies was as tormenting as it was to Cox, had given his fiery captain leave to surprise her if he could do so quietly. Moreover, as he assured the Council of State, quite in Nelson's vein, he was sure that when they gave him strict orders to respect the Grand Duke's port, they could not have contemplated that the smartest frigate in the service would ever be in Dutch hands. There were, of course, great difficulties in the way; but when one day Cornelis Tromp, who had been given command of the 'Phoenix,' put to sea and returned with a fat English prize and her national colours trailing under his stern, Cox could hold his hand no longer. It happened that the morrow was St. Andrew's day, when it was the custom for the Dutch skippers to give a feast to their Italian friends. The drinking was probably unusually deep over the new prizes, and in the dead of night Tromp suddenly found himself boarded on each side by three fisher boats. He had barely time to discharge his pistols and leap overboard out of his cabin window before Cox—for it was he—and the lieutenants of his own and Appleton's ships were in effective possession. The crew were forced below; the moorings were cut; and she was soon standing merrily out to sea through the midst of the blockading squadron. For two hours Dutch and English fought like fury between decks as she sped away from the two frigates that vainly gave chase; but at last all was quiet. Fresh and clean as she was, she easily outsailed her pursuers, and nothing more was heard of her till a message came from Cox to say he was safe in Naples.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gibson, in his account of the exploit, says that Tromp shot Appleton's lieutenant dead as he was breaking open the cabin door, and that this was the only loss.

It was a smart and well-judged piece of work, with a smack of the practical joke which appealed to the Florentine sense of humour. At first the Grand Duke seemed unwilling to take the matter very seriously. The whole thing had been done beyond the range of his batteries, and by the English not a shot had been fired. 'It seems,' wrote Badiley, 'the Great Duke, upon first hearing what was done upon the "Phoenix" frigate, smiled and said the Turks had taken her out of the midst of the Dutch fleet, and not the English,' and his Highness was further pleased to banter the indignant Dutchmen on the excellent watch they kept. Unfortunately Appleton in a moment of ill-timed energy spoiled the game. A Dutch spy had been discovered in one of the English ships and had leapt overboard to swim ashore. Appleton followed in a boat, and just as the man reached the shore he tried to arrest him. The sentry interfered and called the guard, and in the altercation that ensued Appleton so far forgot himself as to strike one of the musketeers. It was more than the Grand Duke could endure. He sent for Appleton and had him arrested at Pisa, but finally was induced to hand him over to Badiley, with whom the Duke was still on excellent terms, on condition that he would keep him under arrest. So the affair ended, but its ill-effects continued, and they were seriously increased when the news of Blake's defeat came in, and it was known that Badiley could no longer expect assistance from home. Moreover, Tromp, after his victory, had proceeded as far as the Isle of Rhé off Rochelle, and it was believed he meant to detach a squadron into the Straits. The Dutch force there had already grown to some thirty sail; there was a credible report that Prince Rupert was coming to command them; and it became clear to the Duke that unless he got rid of his un-

welcome guests, his port could not remain much longer inviolate.

Longland and Badiley redoubled their exertions to meet the expected crisis. Longland had secured six ships in Venice and hoped for two more. He had compelled the Levant Company's merchantmen in Leghorn and Genoa to discharge their cargoes and fit as men-of-war, and was begging the Council of State to send out to him men, even if they could not spare ships. Badiley had got the 'Constant Warwick' and the 'Elizabeth' out of Porto Longone, and they were with Cox at Naples ready to join hands with the Venice ships so soon as they came round. The rest of his convoy he had moved into Porto Ferrajo, the Tuscan port of Elba, where he was permitted to refit them as men-of-war. This change of base had been forced upon him by his hot-headed captains having offended the Spaniards at Naples. They had taken a Dutch prize, and the Viceroy insisted on having the case brought into his own prize court. The captains refused, and were consequently arrested and thrown into prison, 'which,' wrote Longland in despair, 'brings disgrace and contempt upon the Parliament's commanders; and except the Parliament at home resent it in some high manner it will grow customary amongst the Italian Princes.' 'The necessity,' Longland added, setting his finger on the weak point of the whole situation, 'our ships are put to for these Princes' ports makes them trample upon us.'

Badiley had now twenty ships if he could only get them together, and twice he flew to Leghorn on hearing the Dutch had drawn off, but only to find them in force again off the port. They had been reinforced by three ships from Tromp's fleet and now numbered over thirty sail, six of which were lying somewhere off Brindisi to

intercept the ships that were to come from Venice. Badiley's idea, since his captains at Naples had been set free on his demand, was to concentrate his own squadron at Porto Ferrajo, and endeavour, if it pleased God to open a way, to release the ships in Leghorn and then go to meet the Venice ships at Messina. He meant to do his best, but felt bitterly that he had been neglected. 'Some assistance,' he wrote to the Navy Committee, 'is most necessary, not only in respect of the honour of the nation . . . at a place, which may be called the centre of trade and upon which is the eye of all Europe; but it is reported that Prince Rupert may be here every day with his prizes from the West Indies, and if he comes before our conjunction the disorders our mariners may be put to cannot be foreseen.' Such a warning must have sounded very much like a threat; but Badiley was true as steel, though he did not refrain from pointing out that in the early stages of the war, when General Blake and Sir George Ayscue's fleets met, they might have sent him aid and had his squadron back in time for the late battle.

It was in the last days of February 1653, after endless heartburnings over Cox's exploit, that the end came, and Badiley received an ultimatum from the Duke that he must either give up a ship as security for the restoration of the 'Phoenix' to the Dutch, or else clear his war ships out of Leghorn within ten days. It was a hard alternative, but Badiley did not flinch. Ill-manned and badly placed as he was, and smarting as he did at the way he had been abandoned, he could not bring himself to admit the unlawfulness of what he had done, or to lower the lofty tone he had taken over the honour of his flag. So, coolly and with a full appreciation of what it meant, he chose the harder way, and resolved to shake the dust of Leghorn from his feet. To this end he immediately repaired

to his own squadron, which was now again concentrated at Porto Ferrajo, to mature his plans. He had there his flagship, the 'Paragon,' his three frigates, and four armed merchantmen, and in Leghorn were two frigates and also four merchantmen. The Dutch at the moment had but sixteen sail in their blockading squadron. 'It had been better,' wrote Longland, 'if they could have stayed for the conjunction of the Venice ships, but Providence has otherwise determined.' In any case the Venice ships had done their work by drawing off part of the blockading fleet. 'I hope,' he added, 'all will be for the best, as a better opportunity than this with less odds we may not meet with in six months. If God gives us the day, I hope Captain Badiley will so husband the business as to keep the mastery of the seas, which will be of very great import.'

There was indeed ground for hope. Even as the ultimatum was being penned, England was rejoicing over the victory which Blake, Deane, and Monk had won in the Channel over Tromp's fleet on its return from Rhé, and the Navy Committee was writing out to Longland and Badiley that the Lord had been pleased to open a door for their relief, and that all hands and heads were at work to that end. But of this they knew nothing, and had to play their own hand.

On the last day of February, Badiley put out from Porto Ferrajo, and from Piombino sent his last instructions to Appleton. For at Badiley's request the Grand Duke had consented to his arrest being removed in order that he might take out the Leghorn squadron. Badiley's final idea provided for two alternative conditions of weather. If the wind were from the sea, and so in his favour, he intended to keep to windward of Van Galen, and, so soon as the wind came strong, to endeavour to

break through his squadron and join hands with Appleton, who was to be ready outside the Mole to meet him. If on the other hand the wind were off shore, so as to give the Dutch the weather gage, and Van Galen stood off to attack the relieving squadron, then Appleton was at once to give chase. In this case it was, of course, of the utmost importance that Appleton should fall on Van Galen's rear at the earliest possible moment, and Badiley's last words to him were, 'Haste as for your life to follow with all sail you can, so that we be not too much oppressed before you come.' It was equally important that Appleton should on no account expose himself by putting to sea till Badiley and Van Galen were actually engaged. A council of war had been held at Leghorn, at which, in accordance with letters received from Badiley, this had been very strictly laid down as a condition essential to success. But it seems clear that the resolution was come to on the supposition that Van Galen would not stand off to fight the relieving squadron. Subsequently it must have occurred to Badiley that possibly he would, and it was evidently in view of this possibility that at the last moment he gave Appleton the additional instruction.<sup>1</sup> It does not appear to have struck Badiley that his last orders were not entirely on all fours with those he had already given, and that they left to Appleton the final decision as to what was the crucial moment for him to come out. Here was his mistake. Knowing the man Appleton was, it was vital he should leave nothing to his intelligence. In the event, however, of the wind being off shore, a most important decision was so left, and in the result we have one more example of the absolute necessity of the most exact and unmistakable instructions when a combined operation is to be attempted.

<sup>1</sup> Longland to Cromwell, *Dom. Cal.* Nov. 4-14, p. 243.

When Badiley appeared off Leghorn, the wind was blowing from the sea, and he had to content himself with keeping the wind of Van Galen. In the afternoon, however, it began to blow from the land, but still the Dutch did not stir. At nightfall, therefore, Badiley beat close in, and unperceived sent orders to Appleton to break out under cover of the darkness. It was a splendid chance, but at dawn Appleton was still motionless. Bitterly disappointed, Badiley stood to sea again to try to draw the Dutch into the open. The wind was still fresh from the east, and Van Galen, to Badiley's delight, weighed and gave chase. Thinking his moment had come, Appleton, in accordance with his instructions, made sail in his wake, and then happened the thing which—simple as it seems—was apparently beyond Badiley's tactical foresight. So soon as Appleton was well under way, Van Galen went about and stood back for the mouth of the port. The result was a premature action, in which the Dutch admiral was able to bring the whole weight of his sixteen vessels upon Appleton's six, and Badiley was left hopelessly to leeward, little more than a spectator of his colleague's destruction.

Considering how ill-manned were his ships and how demoralised his men by their long detention in port, Appleton seems to have made a fairly good fight of it. It was four hours before all his merchantmen had struck, and he himself, he says, held out for six. Only one ship, a merchantman, managed to get clear, and join Badiley to leeward. The losses on both sides were severe. Those admitted by the Dutch were 123 killed, and as many wounded. Among the latter was Van Galen himself. Early in the action he had been hit in the leg by a round shot. With some demur he was taken below and had it amputated just below the knee. Still he could

not rest. So soon as the operation was over he called for a cup of wine, and, drinking confusion to all regicides, insisted on being carried on deck again to direct the remainder of the fight. It is with regret that one has to tell that nine days later he died of his wound, but with a reputation his countrymen fully and handsomely recognised. We can do no less when we remember that the crown of his long and brilliant record was that, with resources at first scarcely superior to his determined enemy, he drove the English out of the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup>

That, and no less, was the result of his clever victory. In the face of so complete a reverse there was nothing left for Badiley but to make good his escape before he himself was overwhelmed like his colleague, and by the end of March he was clear out of the Mediterranean, with all his squadron and convoy and a Dutch prize he took at Minorca. Not that he intended to abandon his station to the Dutch without a struggle. His own ship was too foul, shot-torn, and worm-eaten to keep the sea; but two of his frigates only required cleaning, and these he intended to send back from Lisbon, 'to amuse the Dutch,' as he said, and prevent their sending north any considerable portion of their ships to reinforce their main fleet. He himself proposed to go home, change his ship, and beg for ten fresh ones, and with this force added to his own he believed he could regain his position. His two frigates and the ships from Venice would have compelled the Dutch to split up their fleet for convoy duty, and he would be able to defeat them in detail.

It was a plausible scheme, but unfortunately his crews refused to listen to his orders. They were resolved to

<sup>1</sup> For further details of the action, see Mr. Spalding's exhaustive study of the whole episode in his monograph on *The Life and Times of Richard Badiley*.

come home after their long spell of service. Badiley was powerless to oppose. He had to give up, and in May with the whole of his mutinous squadron he was back in the Downs.

At the Admiralty he found a new spirit in the ascendant. After Blake's defeat and his protest against the inadequate force with which he had been furnished, the Government had determined to fill up Popham's vacant place, and join Deane and the new man with Blake in the active command in accordance with the original scheme. The new man was General George Monk, whose recent brilliant and thorough work in the pacification of Scotland had justified Cromwell's high opinion of his abilities. The choice is highly significant, for it confirmed absolutely the military influence. Monk was the typical soldier of his time. Unlike Blake or Popham or Deane, he had been a soldier all his life. Born of a knightly and ancient family in Devonshire, war was bred in his bone. When still a boy he had served in Cecil's disastrous expedition to Cadiz, and again in Buckingham's fiasco at Rhé. Since then he had fought and studied under the Dutch flag in the Low Countries with ever increasing distinction till he became captain-lieutenant of the crack English regiment in the service, and so it was under his hard hand that all the most brilliant of the gilded youth of England were schooled into soldiership. At the outbreak of the domestic troubles in his own country, he had come home with an unrivalled reputation as an expert soldier. Deeply versed in the science of his profession, and with all the traditions of the art of war ingrained in him like a second nature, he brought to bear upon the problem of the hour a broad conception of the military exigencies of the case unclouded by political considerations and undisturbed by unessential details. His talent for warlike administration

was no less pronounced. He had learned it in the finest school in Europe, and the directness and homely shrewdness of his methods carried all before him. Politically his simple creed was to be true to his commission and his paymasters. In the civil war he had had to choose between them. He chose his commission and served the King, and though he had been taken prisoner in his first action and lodged in the Tower, no pressure which the Parliament or his personal friends could bring to bear in order to secure his services could move him till the war was over. Then, in accordance with the code of the professional soldier, he considered himself free and frankly took service with the Commonwealth. Such was the man who from now onward was to dominate the navy for many a year to come.

His first taste of true naval warfare had been in the late victory over Tromp, where he had commanded the junior squadron. He was now with Deane in active command of the main fleet, since Blake had been wounded and was still incapacitated. On the Mediterranean problem his influence is at once visible. After the victory, which had absorbed the original squadron destined for the Straits, a fresh one was quickly set on foot at Portsmouth. Deane and Monk did not approve. In what had happened in the Mediterranean they read before everything an emphatic warning of the importance of concentration, and told the Government so plainly. Though they were preparing the new squadron according to their orders, they doubted the wisdom of sending it, and even took upon themselves to suggest that the whole design should be reconsidered in view of the fact that Badiley was coming home. They were of opinion that the squadron could be employed to greater advantage by cruising in touch with themselves in the mouth of the Channel to intercept

the Holland trade. There can be little doubt they were right. The pressing need of the moment, before any real use could be made of the Mediterranean, was to crush the Dutch sea power, and the way to do it was to concentrate every available ship upon their main fleet and the converging points of the commerce on which their national vitality depended. For a while, however, the Government insisted on their view; but after Cromwell's *coup d'état* on April 20, by which he practically became dictator, no more was heard of the new Straits squadron. It was finally absorbed in the great fleet with which, in the famous two days' battle off the North Foreland, Monk, deprived of his colleague at the outset by a round shot, but with Penn and Jordan for his flag officers, defeated Tromp, De Ruyter, and De With. The victory was far from deciding the war. The Dutch were soon ready for sea again, and, eluding the blockade which Monk had established, were able to concentrate in the North Sea a fleet more powerful than ever. The great four days' battle followed, in which Monk was again victorious, and Tromp lost his life. But even then, so desperate had been the fight, the English admiral was unable to establish a working command of the sea, and it was impossible to spare a squadron for the Mediterranean. There the Dutch had to be left in undisputed control, and the war dragged on till Cromwell became Protector and, much to Monk's disgust, put an end to it in the spring of 1654. The Dutch sea power was not entirely crushed. The general conditions rendered such an end impolitic. So peace was made on terms which, without destroying Holland as a potent Protestant power, insured to England a real maritime supremacy—a supremacy which, among all its other advantages, left her free to pursue her interrupted policy within the Straits.

## CHAPTER XVI

## CROMWELL AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

WITH the close of the Dutch war the Protector in undisputed sway found himself with the destinies of England in his lap and his hands free to shape a foreign policy. Having firmly established the new Government at home, his remaining task was to make it respected abroad, and force the powers to abandon the Stuarts. The policy he pursued to this end is one of the knottiest points in English history. It has baffled the greatest historians, as it baffled the most astute of his contemporaries, to unravel completely its shifting intricacies, to reconcile its apparently changing aims. For our present purpose, however, it is unnecessary to push inquiry very far. For the student of English action in the Mediterranean it is in this very uncertainty that its main interest lies. It was in the Mediterranean that he found the chief means of executing his bewildering changes of front, and whichever way he faced for the moment he had always there a point in his position which seemed to outflank and dominate any force his opponents could bring into line against him.

When the Protector looked abroad, the chief factor in the European situation was the struggle between France and Spain, which was the last relic of the Thirty Years' War, and which still continued to fill Europe from end to end with unrest. So deep and widespread were the interests involved that every state had to shape its policy

more or less closely in relation to the great centre of disturbance, and there was not one that did not see its future for good or evil to some extent bound up in the outcome of those interminable campaigns. From year to year the advantage shifted, and no one could foresee the end. This alone was clear, that, if any power should arise to sway the balance definitely to the one side or the other, it would be acclaimed as the controlling force in Europe.

It is then no matter for wonder if Cromwell's instinct quickly assured him that in intervention in that great struggle his foreign policy must speak. Three leading ideas are clearly recognisable in the maze in which he seemed to move. They answered exactly to the three leading motives which had actuated English foreign policy ever since she had become a great power. First there was the religious idea—that his mission was to become the leader of a great Protestant coalition, and finally stay and stifle the counter-reformation. It was of this too that James had dreamed in his feckless way when he first sent a fleet into the Mediterranean. This idea in its integrity would of course involve not mere intervention, but war with both the exhausted combatants. Secondly, there was the commercial idea, which meant a revival of the Elizabethan war, having for its aim the opening of the New World to British trade and the withdrawal of British subjects from the jurisdiction of the Inquisition in Spanish ports. The adoption of this idea involved war with Spain and an alliance with France. Finally there was the national idea—the determination to lift England once more into the position from which she had fallen, and to take vengeance for the insult and contumely which had been heaped upon her ever since she had been a republic. France in this had been

the arch-offender by her piratical treatment of English commerce and her protection of the Royalist cause. It was a view consequently that seemed to point to an alliance with Spain.

The position was one which the two belligerents were quick to realise. Both France and Spain saw clearly that the controlling force had arisen, and each was bidding higher and higher for its good will. In the Spanish Netherlands the Archduke, in appealing to his subjects to raise the money which Cromwell was demanding as part of the price of his alliance, put it frankly enough. 'At last,' he proclaimed, 'God, who is accustomed to act by ways inscrutable to men, has raised up a human power that can make the scales incline to the side of peace by putting a finger ever so lightly upon them.'<sup>1</sup> As far as human eyes could see, it was no less than this that was at stake: whichever belligerent could secure the English alliance would be in a position to dictate terms to the other.

With the game thus completely in his hand it was natural that Cromwell should be in no hurry to decide which card to play, until he saw clearly which line would best achieve his several aims. Moreover, a fresh Royalist rising in the Highlands gave a further cause for deliberation. So for the time the diplomatists held the field and Cromwell spread around him a web of negotiation which for intricacy and instability neither Elizabeth nor James ever surpassed. Still diplomacy without some hint of action would not avail. It was this that had brought James's well-meant efforts into contempt, and Cromwell was no man to fall into the same error. Yet, if action must be taken, it must be action that threatened both France and Spain alike. The solution was simple

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii. 465, May 1654.  
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and ready to hand. It was clearly a situation that lent itself to the Mediterranean treatment, and Cromwell's first step was to set about preparing a fleet for the Straits.

The importance which he attached to the move is testified by the fact that Blake was selected for the command. The cruise that followed is one of the most famous in English naval history. Regardless of all that led up to it, many have even come to acclaim it as the beginning of the English action within the Straits. Legends grew up about it, as they did round Drake; and Blake has been credited with exploits which modern research has shown to be without foundation. Men came to believe that there was scarcely a potentate within the Straits that did not feel the weight of his arm, that the Pope himself cowered in St. Angelo at the thunder of his guns. The truth is that what he accomplished by force of arms was almost nothing, and the reaction tends to treat the cruise as of small importance. Yet the old mythical view is the true one. Those legendary achievements are but the index of the place which the cruise held in men's minds at the time, the echo of its deep moral effect, and they mark for us more clearly than the most exact chronicle the opening of men's eyes to the true meaning of Mediterranean power to England.

The actual intention of the expedition still remains a crux for historians. The original idea is clear enough. On the conclusion of the Dutch war there was a debate in the Council on the disposal of the magnificent fleet of a hundred and sixty sail that was then in commission. The project most favoured was the conquest of the Spanish West Indies. The main objection was that it would involve the loss of our trade with Spain and endanger that to the Levant. To this it was answered that hostilities would

necessarily be confined to the West Indies, for the English trade was of so much importance to both Spain and Flanders that Philip could not allow the war to spread to Europe. The idea that you might attack the colonial possessions of a power just as you could make reprisals on her ships without a general state of war arising is strange enough to our ears, but it was only that on which England and Spain had mutually acted ever since the commencement of what are now usually called the piratical operations of Drake and his fellows. The argument was sound enough, but it was met by the objection that, even if the proposed expedition did not lead to war, the Mediterranean trade would still lie open to Spanish reprisals. To this it was replied 'that that will not prove so; for, having peace with France (which must be supposed upon this war), we shall have the benefit of their friendship and harbours upon the Mediterranean Sea, which are much more useful for us than the Spaniards'—that is to say, we should be in a position to protect the Levant trade by a fleet acting from French ports. Thereupon it was proposed to allot forty sail for the Channel, eight each for the Scottish, Irish, and Newfoundland stations, thirty for the West Indies, and sixteen for the Straits, the rest being paid off. Here then is the germ of Blake's famous fleet. It was originally designed to protect English commerce in the Mediterranean while the Spanish West Indies were attacked.<sup>1</sup>

Before it sailed, however, its true intentions, as we shall see, became much more of an enigma. Blake's final instructions have never been found. They remain in the obscurity with which they were religiously veiled at the time. The latest and best authority believes that the admiral had none at all, except some vague directions

<sup>1</sup> *Clarke Papers*, vol. iii. App. B. p. 205.

to act against the Barbary corsairs and generally to protect the English Levant trade.<sup>1</sup>

This is almost certainly the truth. He was sent, as Mansell was sent a generation before, under the time-honoured veil that had long ago been worn transparent. He was to act as Mansell was to act on such instructions as should subsequently reach him. He was sent as Mansell was sent and as our Mediterranean squadron is maintained to-day as the symbol of English power, and to be ready at the controlling point for any eventuality. Of all this it is impossible that there should be any direct evidence; but everything becomes clear if, in the light we have of all that had gone before, we trace the growth of the idea in the minds of Cromwell and his advisers.

Ever since Badiley's defeat Longland had not ceased to urge the importance of a Mediterranean squadron. When he heard of Monk's final victory over the Dutch he redoubled his importunity. It was not merely a question of protecting commerce, he said, but it meant

<sup>1</sup> See Gardiner, iii. 373 n. The orders he there refers to are copied into the *Entry Book* of Car. II., No. 4, p. 17 under the impossible date of July 1656. It should be, he says, July 22, 1654. There is, however, a difficulty in assigning this date. The entry runs, 'On receiving these instructions, you shall with the fleet under your command sail with the first convenient wind and weather unto Algiers.' Now on July 22, 1654, Blake had no fleet under his command. He did not hoist his flag till August 10 (Weale's *Journal*, *Sloane MSS.* 1431). The orders further authorise him, in case the Algerines refuse the demands he is charged to make, 'to assault them by land or sea, and fight with and slay all persons opposing you.' Now on March 14, 1655, Blake at Cagliari wrote complaining that he had no such authority. His general instructions limited him to blockading the corsairs' ports for a few days, and he asked for express authority to attack their ports (Thurloe, iii. 232, and see *post*, p. 310). It is clear therefore that these instructions must be subsequent to his request of March 24, 1655. In all probability they were the answer he got, and the true date is the summer of 1655. So far then as the entry is to be trusted, it is evidence that Algiers was not his original objective, but rather an afterthought, when the success of his attack at Tunis was known.

'many other advantages in relation to France, Spain, and Barbary.' Getting no response, he showed how such a squadron as he desired might maintain itself without any expense to the state by reprisals upon the rich Levant trade of France. Apart from every other consideration, as he further urged, so contemptuous had the neighbouring Princes grown since the Dutch had been left in undisputed mastery of those seas, that a fleet was absolutely necessary to bring them to reason.

His well-reasoned importunity, poured into the ears of Cromwell's ministers with ever increasing vehemence, cannot have been without its effect, supported as it was by the lamentations of the powerful Levant Company. It is even probable that it would have led to action before the conclusion of the Dutch war but for Monk's opposition. Cromwell's trust in the wide capacity and judgment of his new admiral was daily increasing, and he, as we have seen, was opposed on the broad principles of his art to any weakening of the main fleet till that of the enemy was completely crushed. Events showed the justness of his view. For the pressure he brought to bear at the vital point soon compelled the States to recall their squadron from the Straits. But even then Longland's importunity did not cease. Since the Dutch had gone, he said, the French had become worse than ever. English commerce seemed to be held fair game for everybody, and a squadron was more necessary than ever to restore English prestige.

The despatch in which he insisted on this view reached London early in April 1654, just after the peace with Holland was signed, and indications at once appear that at last he was to be heard. Before the month was out the Council of State, as we have seen, had practically decided in principle on a Mediterranean squadron. Mazarin had

taken alarm and was writing to Bordeaux, his Ambassador in London, that he was to keep him well informed as to the ships that were to be detached from the main fleet. In spite of the peace there was no cessation of naval activity in the English dockyards, and half Europe was anxiously asking where the blow was to fall. The Grand Duke of Tuscany promptly trimmed his sails for a storm in the old quarter. In the last days of the war the Dutch had sunk a British ship within the limits of his port, and he now seized two of their vessels as security that reparation should be made to the injured owners. In every exchange in Italy the coming of the English fleet was the subject of anxious discussion, and most people saw in Cromwell a new and more terrible Gustavus Adolphus, and were sure it was Civita Vecchia, the Pope's own port, that would first feel the smart.

But of all men Mazarin had the gravest cause for concern. He had again got a working hold of France; but Condé, the leader of the rebellious opposition, was in communication with the Protector, and an English fleet at Bordeaux or Rochelle could easily stir the smouldering embers of insurrection into a new flame. Worse still, there was the prospect of Blake's being able to deal him such another blow as had robbed him of Dunkirk. For Mazarin was once more reviving his old Mediterranean policy. Since it had broken down four years before, Spain had been making steady progress in both Italy and Catalonia. But the Duke of Guise was now free again, and Mazarin had resolved to use him for a second bold bid for the domination of the Two Sicilies. In Toulon a powerful expedition was being prepared, and Monsieur de Nieuchèse, who was in command of the French Ocean squadron at Brest, was under orders to carry every available ship to join it at the earliest possible moment. Nor

was this all. This time the attempt was to be supported by a powerful coalition. Savoy was already engaged. Genoa, which was in a state of sullen anger with Spain, was being pressed to join and accept a French protectorate. It was also hoped that, as before, the new Portuguese kingdom, in return for France securing its recognition by the Pope, would contribute a powerful contingent to the fleet. Lastly, the Papacy itself was to be persuaded to seize the opportunity of throwing off the oppression of Spain. As Longland got wind of the design, he kept sending home news of its development. He knew by this time that the fleet he had been praying for was coming, and he pointed out the splendid opportunity it afforded for England to exert a mastering influence. Every one said—so he wrote—that, before such a coalition as Mazarin was forming, Spain would not survive in Italy without the Protector's help. So keen was he for action that he had taken steps to secure an accurate list of the Toulon fleet, and begged that it might be handed to Blake or Badiley.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile at home the idea of a Mediterranean fleet had been growing. Neither France nor Spain would come to terms, and on June 5, in secret sitting of the Council of State, it was resolved that a fleet of twenty-four ships should be prepared 'for the Straits' and another of fourteen for the 'Western design.'<sup>2</sup> Thus the Mediterranean squadron had risen to the first place instead of being, as it was originally, inferior to that which was to operate in the West Indies. No reason appears for the change. We can only note that it was contemporaneous with the discovery of a plot against the Protector, in which the Baron de Baas, who had been

<sup>1</sup> Longland's despatches are in Thurloe, ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Dom. Cal.* p. 200.

especially sent over by Mazarin to smooth his relations with Cromwell, was supposed to be implicated; and, further, that the period of active preparation which immediately followed coincided with the Protector's last efforts to induce France to join in a Protestant coalition against Spain and with his ultimate conviction that he must take his own course.

As Blake's fleet gathered life, Mazarin grew feverishly anxious. Neither Guise nor Nieuchèse was ready to sail, and he kept petulantly pressing and taunting them to be gone. At the same time Longland's suggestions grew more ambitious and strangely tuned to the Protector's new note. The Toulon fleet, he said, was still in port, not daring to sail for fear of Blake, and then came a hint that opens up a startling vista of possibilities. We have seen already how keenly he felt the weak point of England's position in the Mediterranean, and how he lamented to see her dependent on the Italian Princes for a base. Now he saw Genoa hesitating between the two dominations that never ceased to threaten her, and the old dream of Raleigh's time revived in his active mind. Of all states, he said, Genoa was the least prepared for war. Though rich, her wealth lay solely in commerce and finance, and she could not even feed her population from her own territory. He knew her weakness, he knew her temptations, and he knew her splendid harbour. From where he was he could see all, and he looked and longed. 'They have the best port in Italy,' he wrote, when he knew Blake was about to sail. 'I wish it were in the hands of others that have more occasion for it.' In Cromwell's tangled negotiations with France and Spain, while each was threatened by a gathering fleet, from each was demanded the conquest of a continental port as the price of his goodwill. From Spain he would require Calais, from France Dunkirk. Yet of a

port within the Straits, where, in view of the strained relations with France, it was now far more necessary, not a word was said. As far as we know, Longland's hint fell dead. Yet it is strange that, seeing how the navy men felt the necessity, and how little Cromwell's dreams of continental action were limited by practical difficulties, the seed did not ever show some sign of growth. The actual adverse occupation of Genoa was of course out of the question, but it is by no means clear that some arrangement might not have been come to, by which the desired ends would have been achieved in a more peaceable way. A naval protectorate, for instance, would have freed Genoa from the domination of both Spain and France, and in return she could well have afforded to cede or lease to England a port in Corsica. Such an arrangement would have secured Cromwell's position in the Mediterranean better perhaps than any step he could have taken. Nor could a more favourable moment have been looked for to open negotiations. It was at this time that the fear of a league between England and Spain was holding Genoa back from France, and she was about to make advances to the Protector for a close commercial alliance, and that with an eagerness which leaves little doubt she was prepared to pay a very high price to turn the stream of English trade from Leghorn to her own quays.

Whatever might have come of it, it is unfortunate that a suggestion, which seemed so exactly to hit the exigencies of Cromwell's position, did not reach London in time for it to be turned to even diplomatic advantage. Before it was received Blake had started, and the situation appeared to have taken definite shape. Though the Marquis of Bordeaux was still in England, the negotiations with France were practically broken off. In spite of the 'Western' squadron, which was still being brought

forward at Plymouth, Spain seemed to have it all her own way, and Mazarin's anxiety redoubled for the success of his Neapolitan venture. At the end of July Blake's squadron was gathering in the Downs and Guise had not yet even left Paris. On August 1 Mazarin, losing all patience, wrote him a sharp letter saying that, if he did not embark within ten days, the King would divert the expedition to another object. That very day the gay young Duke set out, and a week later Mazarin was assuring him that, if he would only sail immediately, the reinforcements he required to bring his force up to the promised strength should follow him at once.<sup>1</sup> At the same time he was bringing all his weight to bear upon Genoa to press her into his design, and assuring her that as yet there was no league between England and Spain. Nieuchèse in Brest was being scolded as roundly as Guise, and being angrily told that if he did not get to sea at once he would find his passage into the Mediterranean barred altogether.<sup>2</sup> Mazarin at any rate had little doubt that the first object of Blake's fleet was to frustrate Guise's design.

Though Cromwell's intentions were still uncertain, to outward appearance he had practically cast in his lot with Spain. On August 5, only a fortnight after he had finally made up his mind to prosecute his design against the West Indies, he wrote to Philip to say that Blake was about to sail for the Mediterranean to protect English commerce and begging the hospitality of his ports.<sup>3</sup> On August 10 Blake hoisted his flag in the Downs, with Badiley for vice-admiral, and Jordan, who was one of the new and most brilliant reputations of the Dutch war, for the

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Mazarin*, vi, 607, 610, 613.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 591, 598, 608.

<sup>3</sup> Debate in the Protector's Council, July 20, 1654, *Clarke Papers*, iii. 207.

second flag-officer. By the 25th he was at Plymouth, and Mazarin was still pressing Guise to get to sea and reprimanding Nieuchèse for his delay more testily than ever. After one ineffectual attempt to get out of the Channel, which lost him ten days, Blake finally got away on October 8, and after looking into Lisbon, presumably to see whether there was any sign of the Brest division having put in there or of a move from the Portuguese fleet, he passed on his way.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The dates and main details of Blake's cruise, except where otherwise stated, are taken from Weale's *Journal* (*Sloane MSS.* 1431). Weale was an officer in the 'Amity' frigate.

The list of his fleet as given by Penn (vol. ii. 150), and corrected from Weale's *Journal* and Blake's despatches, was as follows, besides two or three auxiliary or store vessels:

Rates	Ships	Guns	Men	Commanders
3 second .	'George' .	60	350	Robert Blake, General
	'Andrew' .	54	300	John Stokes, Captain
	'Unicorn' .	54	300	Rich. Badiley, Vice-Adm. Jos. Jordan, Rear-Adm.
4 third . .	'Langport' .	50	260	Roger Cuttance
	'Bridgewater' .	50	260	Anth. Earning
	'Worcester' .	46	240	William Hill
	'Plymouth' .	50	260	Rich. Stayner.
11 fourth .	'Hampshire' .	34	160	Benjamin Blake
	'Foresight' .	36	160	Peter Mootham
	'Kent' .	40	170	Edw. Witheridge
	'Taunton' .	36	160	Thos. Vallis
	'Diamond' .	36	160	John Harman
	'Ruby' .	36	160	Edm. Curtis
	'Newcastle' .	40	180	Nath. Cobham
	'Amity' .	30	120	Henry Pack
	'Maidstone' .	32	140	Thos. Adams
	'Princess Mary' .	34	150	John Lloyd
3 fifth . .	'Elias' .	32	140	John Symonds
	'Mermaid' .	24	90	
	'Success' .	24	60	Wm. Kendal
3 sixth . .	'Sophia' .	24	60	Rob. Kirby
	'Hector' .	16	35	
	'Dolphin' .	16	45	John Smith
	'Nonsuch' Ketch	10	30	

In Penn's list the 'Success' and 'Sophia' appear as above, but in the main fleet list of 1653, under the same commanders, they are given as

Mazarin's anxiety was now extreme. For all his pressing, Guise had only got to sea a fortnight before Blake finally cleared the Lizard, and Nieuchèse with the Brest division was still at his moorings. No sooner did the harassed minister know that Blake had really gone than he told Bordeaux he must find out what his destination was. A week later this despatch was followed by instructions to demand peremptorily from the Protector what orders Blake had about dealing with French ships, and to ask for his passports if he did not receive a satisfactory answer.<sup>1</sup> At the same time Louis himself wrote to Nieuchèse at Brest, telling him that Blake had sailed for the Mediterranean, and that he was to put to sea at once in order to get ahead of him and join the Chevalier Paul, who was in command of Guise's fleet, before the English appeared. 'I am sure,' said the King, 'that if you and Paul are only together, when they meet you, they will not dare to attack, and that under commanders so brave and experienced as you and Paul it will not be easy to win any advantage over my forces.' There was still more anxiety in what followed. 'I have written to-day,' he added, 'to the Sieur de Bordeaux, my Ambassador in England, to demand of the Protector an explanation in writing of the manner in which his fleet is to behave to mine, giving him to understand that I have no fear of an action if it has to be fought, but that I would gladly avoid any incident which may prevent the nations enjoying an assured repose and disturb their commerce. It is

38-gun frigates with crews of 150 and 160 men. In Derrick's list of 1652, from the *Pepys Miscellany*, the 'Success' appears as a fourth rate with 150 men. Presumably she was the French prize 'Jules,' which Blake had taken in 1651. Blake, in his despatch of March 24, 1655, speaks of having with him the 'Mermaid,' a 24-gun fifth rate with 90 men. It is not in Penn's list.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Mazarin*, October 21-26 (o.s.), pp. 373, 378.

your duty to avoid a meeting with the English fleet, but if by chance you fall in with it, I doubt not you will maintain the position (*les avantages*) that is due to me. . . . Perhaps, and I desire it should be so, the Protector will make such an answer to the Sieur de Bordeaux that the fears I have suggested will vanish.'<sup>1</sup>

So far from Bordeaux receiving the explanation he was instructed to demand, he could not even obtain an audience; and yet, instead of his taking his leave, the negotiations for an alliance were reopened. The fact is that, situated as France was, and in spite of Turenne's recent successes on her northern frontier against Condé and the Spaniards, she could not face a British fleet in the Mediterranean; and while Blake's flag was flying Mazarin felt himself compelled, at almost any cost, to keep the peace with the Protector. Blake's fleet was the trump card of the game. It was dangled before his eyes like a bait to lead him on, and whenever he tried to seize it, it was snatched away, and fresh concessions demanded. 'When I reproach them,' wrote Bordeaux the day after Blake had joined the fleet, 'that at previous conferences they have offered, in return for a subsidy of two million livres, to maintain twenty vessels in the Mediterranean to support our designs there, they tell me that these were only conversations, which were not binding.' In vain Mazarin thus tried again and again to get the card into his own hand, and again and again was forced to submit to fresh humiliations for fear of seeing it played against him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Archives de la Maison de Nieuchèse,' November 6, 1654 (n.s.), cited by Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Bordeaux to Brienne, November 13-23, 1654, Thurloe, ii. 724, and same to same, p. 731. Mazarin to Bordeaux, December 28 (o.s.), Guizot, ii. App. xiii. p. 490. Instructions to Bordeaux, July 6-11, *ibid.* p. 460. Bordeaux to Brienne, August 11-21, *ibid.* p. 479.

Meanwhile Blake, with his flag flying in the 'St. George' (or 'George' by her puritanical name), a ship of sixty guns, had appeared before Cadiz and anchored off Rota at the point of the bay. Besides smaller vessels he had twenty ships and frigates, the smallest of which carried twenty-four guns. All had been specially sheathed for a long cruise in the Mediterranean,<sup>1</sup> and Blake had the ball before him. The Governor sent off to invite him to enter the harbour, but Blake replied that he was bound with all speed for the Straits. The fact was that he had found the English *chargé d'affaires* awaiting him at Cadiz with information that four days previously nine French war ships had passed, making for the Straits. Fearing that he had missed Nieuchèse, he contented himself with handing to the Governor Cromwell's letter to Philip, and at once carried on in chase. Of his immediate business he made no secret, and far and wide through Europe spread the news how the admiral had openly proclaimed that his mission was to fight the Duke of Guise wherever he found him.<sup>2</sup>

Every one believed the Duke was doomed. Having finally sailed from Toulon in the last days of September, he had met with baffling gales, that broke up his fleet and delayed him so long that sixteen days out he had to water as best he could at the southern end of Sardinia. Driven from his anchors by a gale, he was forced almost under the Spanish guns at Cagliari, and there had to wait a week, hoping to get touch with his galleys which he had entirely lost. After all he had to sail without them and proceed on his way round Sicily in a sadly crippled condi-

<sup>1</sup> *Domestic Calendar*, p. 229, June 29, 1654.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lettre du Comte de Molina,' Guizot, i. 488. Mazarin to Bordeaux, January 2, 1655 (n.s.), *ibid.* 490, and Thurloe, iii. 41. Mazarin mentions Blake's 'boast,' but Molina merely writes that 'people say he is in chase of the French fleet.'

tion.<sup>1</sup> For his design was not to trust again entirely to the fickle population of Naples itself, but to land somewhere in Calabria or Apuglia from the Gulf of Taranto or the Adriatic.<sup>2</sup> In this way he hoped to meet the cavalry which was to join him from the north, raise the country people against their Spanish masters, and approach the capital from the rear like a conqueror. So luckless however was he with the weather that, after vainly trying to double the southern cape of Sicily for three days, he had to bear up to Malta for shelter and water. There, however, to his high indignation, he received a shotted salute from the Spanish knights, and had to run back in despair to Favignano, an island at the west end of Sicily. It was in Spanish hands; but the garrison abandoned the forts that protected the anchorage, and he was able to water in peace. By this time, however, his provisions were running so short—this at least is the reason he gave—that he felt it useless to continue his original plan and resolved to proceed direct to Naples. This he did, and on November 4 he landed and occupied Castellamare in the south-east corner of the bay.

At the same time Blake entered the Straits, and heard at Gibraltar fresh news of the Brest squadron. It had not yet passed in, and he spread his frigates to get touch with it. Three days later Stayner, one of the smartest officers in the fleet, and some other captains came in to report they could see nothing of Nieuchèse, and Blake, with a sharp reprimand, promptly sent them

<sup>1</sup> 'Relation de tout ce qui s'est passé au voyage de Naples, par M. le Duc de Guise,' in *Recueil Historique*, Cologne, 1666, 12mo. This is a despatch which Guise wrote from 'Cap de Corse, December 17, 1654,' on his retreat to Toulon.

<sup>2</sup> Longland and other intelligencers believed him to be going to land in Apuglia from the Adriatic, but in his 'Relation' (*ubi supra*) he himself only mentions Calabria.

out again.<sup>1</sup> From the manner in which the narrator insists on Blake's anger with the offending officers we may detect another indication of his bracing influence on the navy. Ever since the birth of the new art inefficient cruising had been its curse, and it would seem that Blake had determined to turn a new leaf. No doubt, according to the custom of the sea, his captains thought they had done their duty, and were surprised at their reception. But what was good enough for them was not good enough for a man trained in the art of war on land. Step by step the soldiers were lifting naval warfare to a science, and there is little doubt that from this momentous sojourn of Blake in Gibraltar Road we may mark, in addition to its other consequences, another stride upon the upward way.

But for all his vigilance and discipline the days went by and not a sign of the enemy appeared. Days grew to weeks, and the most critical period of Blake's cruise, when Guise was actually at work in Naples Bay, was slipping by, while he clung in forced inaction to the station he had chosen. He could not know the man Nieuchèse was, or the orders Louis had given him. Nieuchèse had interpreted them only too faithfully. Finding, as it would seem, that Blake was before him, and mindful of his instructions to keep out of his way, he had put back into Lisbon, and there was quietly cleaning his ships. It was nearly three weeks before Blake knew this, and was convinced it was no use waiting. On November 21 he at last resolved to pass on, and after touching at Malaga and Alicante he stood across for Sardinia. He reached it on December 4, and at Cagliari heard that Guise had been there.<sup>2</sup> Whither he

<sup>1</sup> Weale's *Journal*.

<sup>2</sup> Weale in his *Journal* says that on December 4 they heard Guise had been there twenty-nine days before—i.e. November 5. But at this time he

had gone no one could tell, but four days later intelligence came in that he was at Naples. On this hot scent Blake weighed without a moment's delay, and in three days was beating into the bay. But, high as had been his hopes, it was too late. Not a French ship was to be seen. The prey was already flown, and Blake had to fume under the first of those close chances of which England's record in the Mediterranean is so full.

Having seized Castellamare, Guise had proceeded to improve his holding. After a stubborn resistance and considerable loss, Torre Annunciata, a work on the Naples side, fell; but there his success ended. In vain he tried to seize the neighbouring mills, on which depended his only chance of feeding his men. The Spaniards were too strong, and the reckless plundering, which he was unable to control, effectually turned the inhabitants against him. The intendant of his army reported but a week's provisions left. There was no help for it—so Guise thought—but to let go and return to Toulon for his promised reinforcements and fresh stores. In a week the whole force was embarked again. For a fortnight more, while Blake was still clinging to Gibraltar, the weather held the French fleet where it was at the mercy of a resolute attack. 'If he (Blake),' lamented Longland, when eight of Guise's retreating ships had put into Leghorn, 'if he had not stayed at the Straits mouth, but come directly for Italy, he had found all the French fleet in a pound in Naples Bay, where he might have done what he would with 'em; but all will be for the best.'<sup>1</sup>

There was certainly much truth in his godly resignation at Castellamare. Guise himself says nothing of having been at Cagliari a second time. Weale therefore seems to be mistaken in the information Blake actually received.

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, iii. 12.

nation. Had Blake been in time the real significance of his cruise would not have fallen into the oblivion which has so long obscured it. Seeing the condition of Guise's fleet and the veteran material under Blake's command, a great victory must have recorded the object of the campaign indelibly. But as it was the work was done without shedding of blood. For the second time the feather-headed Duke had courted disaster, and shattered Mazarin's dreams of Mediterranean power. How far Blake's presence had contributed directly to the miscarriage it is difficult to say. The failure was mainly due to Guise's irresponsible determination to abandon his original intention of landing in Calabria. At a blow it upset Mazarin's elaborately laid plans, and threw the Duke back on trusting once more to the disaffection of the Neapolitans. Though Guise himself says nothing on the point, we know how nervous the French authorities were about the English Mediterranean squadron, and we may be sure that Guise's fatal step was largely due to the fear of being shut into the Adriatic by Blake. Nieuchèse's continued delay in joining was no doubt the immediate cause, but this delay was also the result of Blake's action. His interposition at Gibraltar between the two French squadrons had in fact rendered both of them impotent. Nor must it be forgotten how important was the moral support of his presence to the other side. In every Italian seaport the rumour was that Cromwell's admiral was coming to assist the Spaniards. It did everything to restore their failing prestige, and must have materially assisted the Viceroy of Naples in securing as he did, by timely concessions, the loyalty of his restless subjects.

However this may be, Blake's presence put an end to all hope that the attempt could be renewed. When, on

December 7, Guise wrote from Cape Corso in Corsica to announce his retreat, he appears fully to have expected that he would be sent out again. He was not going to allow a man to land, he said. He meant to be ready to act the moment he received his orders. But, however sanguine the Duke might be, Mazarin was under no illusions. Though in his letters he tried to make light of his failure, setting against it Turenne's successes on the northern frontier, it is clear he felt his prestige had suffered a severe blow, and that his great design was dead beyond present recovery. Blake himself did not fail to emphasise the situation. Having ascertained at Naples, where he was accorded a brilliant reception, all that had taken place, he did not let the grass grow under his feet. Leaving one or two vessels behind him, presumably for intelligence purposes, he gave chase to Guise with the bulk of the fleet. But he was just too late. On December 20 he looked into Leghorn. Eight French ships had put in there, but for fear, as some said, that Blake would get between them and Toulon, they were already gone, and he had to learn that the whole force was safe in its own ports. For Guise to stir out again with Blake where he was, was not to be thought of.

It was clearer than ever that, before France could make any real progress in the Mediterranean, she must come to an understanding with England. So, in spite of all the provocation Louis had received, Bordeaux was told to defer his departure and use the delay in a fresh effort to bring the Protector to reason. The negotiations therefore continued as before, but with as little success. Cromwell could not but feel the enhanced advantage of his position, and Bordeaux was as little able to conceal the increased eagerness of his master for a treaty. Louis conceded everything but the claim of England to

intervene on behalf of French Protestants, and on this point the Protector was equally determined to insist. So the condition of reprisal, that was scarcely removed from war, continued. Blake was not recalled and remained to carry out the original intentions of his commission.

Though it is on the remaining incidents of the cruise, real and imaginary, that its fame has rested, they are insignificant beside that part of his operations which closed with the dispersal of Guise's force. The story of his having at Civita Vecchia exacted from the Pope an indemnity for having allowed Rupert to sell prizes in the Papal ports is without foundation. A similar tale in relation to the Grand Duke of Tuscany is traceable to a Genoese source. Their Ambassador Extraordinary was at this time in London, pressing the Protector to conclude a reciprocal commercial treaty by which the subjects of each state should be on equal footing with those of the other. Their main object was, as we have seen, to divert the British trade from Leghorn to their own port. But the envoy did not fail to point out that while such a treaty would be of great benefit to the Genoese state and its independence, England would also gain by it in other ways. 'It would also,' he wrote to Cromwell, 'be useful and beneficial to the English nation for the many and obvious reasons which, without doubt, will be in the mind of your most serene Highness.'<sup>1</sup>

There seems in the words a suggestion such as Longland had hinted at some months before, that Genoa might become for the English navy what she had so long been for that of Spain. But it led to nothing. Though Cromwell entertained the idea, the merchants were loath to desert Leghorn; and though the Genoese never lost

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, iii. 118; Gardiner, *History*, iii. 374-6, and see also his note on 'Blake at Leghorn' in *Eng. Hist. Review*, xiv. 109.

an opportunity of offering their hospitality to the English fleet, English trade remained faithful to the Medici. So far from quarrelling with the Grand Duke, Blake met with a cordial welcome, and, in spite of the activity of the Genoese, his visit served to knit still more closely the remarkable sympathy that had so long existed between the English and the Florentines. If any satisfaction was needed it was amply afforded in the full liberty which Blake was allowed to refresh his fleet for the completion of the work which yet lay before him. Still there were reports that the French fleet at Toulon was coming out again, and he would not leave his dominating position until he had learned for certain that Louis had ordered his ships to be laid up for the winter. Discouraged by his complete failure, the King was going to content himself with sending out privateers. 'And so,' wrote Blake complacently, 'there will be no further stop to our proceedings from Trapani.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Despatch, *Add. MSS.* 9304, f. 99.

## CHAPTER XVII

### BLAKE AND THE TURKISH SEA POWER

THE proceedings to which Blake referred were those which had been made the pretence for sending him to the Mediterranean. Well had they served Cromwell's turn, and his Admiral had now leisure to attend to them. By a dramatic turn the duty before him carries us back to our starting point. We have traced step by step how the germ planted half a century before by Ward, the English mutineer, had worked with ever widening effect till it had changed the whole conditions and meaning of Mediterranean power. With an English fleet dominant in its waters and no rival navy in a position to dispute its command we see the revolution consummated, and the first use England was to make of her new power was to strike at the point where the pregnant seed had been sown. Tunis was Blake's objective, and on January 15, 1655, he sailed from Leghorn for Trapani to meet the ships he had left at Naples. With the exception of four frigates which he had detached to watch the Balearic islands for French privateers on the trade route, and a ketch left behind at Leghorn to bring on letters from home, his whole force was with him.<sup>1</sup>

It was likely to be wanted, for Blake had before him an undertaking not unlike that which he had just abandoned for the time, and which was similarly calculated

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of March 14, 1655, *Add. MSS.* 9304.

to mark the new domination. But now it was a still more momentous struggle in which he was about to intervene—the ceaseless pressure of the East upon the West. Concurrently with the contest between France and Spain for the command of the Western Mediterranean a still fiercer one had been raging for the command of the Eastern half. Ten years previously it had commenced by the sudden descent of an overwhelming Turkish force upon Crete, which still formed part of the Venetian empire. The new storm was yet another outcome of the Thirty Years' War. While Christendom was absorbed in the internecine strife it was inevitable that the Moslem should seize the opportunity to push further westward into the Mediterranean. It was again Venice who was left to bar the way, and the Sultan had determined to drive her from her ancient possessions of Crete, as he had driven her from Cyprus.

The war naturally turned upon the command of the sea, and Venice had chartered a number of English ships to reinforce her navy. It was some of these that Longland had induced her to spare for Badiley's relief. There were reasons why scarcely any sacrifice could be too great to win the goodwill of the Commonwealth. Realising the tremendous issue at stake, she had sought in every Court in Europe to induce the combatants to abandon the fratricidal struggle, but hitherto in vain. From the small Papal navy and the Knights of Malta alone had any assistance been forthcoming; and, seeing herself left almost alone to fight the battle of Christendom, she rose to the occasion with all her old heroism and resource. Though Canea, the westernmost part of the island, fell an easy prey, Crete was far from conquered. Year after year the struggle had gone on at the sacrifice of innumerable lives and treasure untold. In Mocenigo Venice had found

a commander worthy to stand beside the greatest of her great names, and under his daring and sagacious leadership the Candiot war, as it was called, was made to glow as one of the brightest chapters in her annals. Still it was all she could do with her enfeebled resources to hold her own, and so soon as the Commonwealth was revealed as a new force in Europe she applied to it for help.

It was some time, however, before she could wipe out the ill-effects of her unhappy patronage of the Stuart Court, and from the Long Parliament she received little encouragement. With the change of Government, however, she took fresh hope, and not without reason. It was a cause which appealed strongly to Cromwell's crusading spirit, and for a time he seems to have doubted whether this was not the right way to use the power which God had given him. He told the Venetian resident, at his first audience in January 1654, that he had every desire to assist the Republic, which he considered the buckler of religion against its most powerful foe. Later in the year, when an Ambassador Extraordinary arrived on the same mission and diplomatically stirred the Protector's religious zeal, he replied that the generous defence offered by Venice against the common foe laid every Christian Prince under obligations to her; that he himself had often felt the pricks and goad of zeal for the service of God, and that, if the embassy had only come sooner, it might have found the conjuncture more favourable to its objects.<sup>1</sup>

But high as was the obligation under which Venice had placed the Commonwealth by granting Longland's request, and strongly as her appeal moved a man of Cromwell's nature, there were two insuperable difficulties

<sup>1</sup> H. R. Brown, *Venetian Studies*, p. 370 *et seq.*

in the way of a war with Turkey—one, the opposition of the powerful Levant Company, which was alarmed for its Turkish interests, and the other, the West Indian adventure, on which Cromwell had already decided to embark. It is possible of course that, in spite of these objections, he gave Blake to understand he might do what he could, but of this there is no trace. It is more probable that at Leghorn the admiral, with his ardour only whetted by having missed Guise, found the local influences irresistible. All Italy was ringing with the latest exploits of Mocenigo and mourning his death. Isolated with a few ships in the midst of a great Turkish fleet off the Dardanelles, he had fought his way clear, dealing such destruction around him that it took the Capitan Pasha a month to get his fleet fit for sea again. But, in spite of Mocenigo's heroism, a Turkish fleet had been able to get through to the relief of the army in Crete, and he had died, men said, of a broken heart.

It is easy to understand how Blake's chivalrous spirit, burning as it was to do some deed that should make the name of England resound through Europe, longed to take up the dead admiral's sword and strike a blow for the hard-pressed Republic. At Leghorn, moreover, it could not be forgotten how, in spite of her necessities, Venice had consented to release the English ships in her service at Badiley's call. What half promises Longland may have made to secure such a concession we cannot tell; but, as Badiley himself was there as vice-admiral of the fleet, the two of them could easily have persuaded Blake that some return was called for. Authority or no authority, a blow for the relief of Candia was in the spirit of the high purpose for which he had been sent out, and in the spirit which inspired Cromwell's foreign policy as he had recently declared it. 'God,' said the Protector in silencing

Lambert's objections to an aggressive line of action, 'God has not brought us hither where we are, but to consider the work that we may do in the world as well as at home.' It was a sentiment entirely in accord with Blake's nature, and, as though from Heaven, a chance was offered him in a manner and of a nature that he was no man to resist.

His resolution was as sudden as it was heroic. On January 15, on the eve of sailing from Leghorn, he had written home to say he was going to Trapani to pick up his detached frigates, and so to Tunis or Tripoli as seemed best on the spot. That up to this time he had no very definite orders is clear. Feeling the importance of his presence in the Mediterranean, he begged that victuals might be sent out to him, so that he might keep his station 'so as to be ready,' as he said, 'for any service which the Providence of God or instructions shall lead us unto.'<sup>1</sup> He had hardly got to sea when, though the weather had promised thoroughly fair, he encountered a furious gale which for three days kept his whole fleet in constant peril of being cast away among the islands off the Tuscan coast, and finally drove him back to Leghorn. His faith was sorely tried. 'It hath pleased God,' he wrote in describing the catastrophe he had escaped, 'to exercise us with variety of wind and weather, and with divers mixed providences and strange dispensations never to be forgotten by us, especially in regard that He hath been pleased in them all to rouse His compassion to prevail against His threatenings, and His mercy to triumph over His judgment.'<sup>2</sup> In this frame of mind he received a piece of information which under the circumstances can only have seemed to him like the finger of Heaven.

News had just come in that the war-ships of all the Barbary states from Algiers to Tripoli, the flower

<sup>1</sup> *Add. MSS.* 9304, f. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* f. 101.

of the Moslem marine, were to concentrate at Tunis on February 12 for the Sultan's service against Crete. The war had long focussed round the siege of Candia, the Venetian capital of the island. Mocenigo's line of strategy had been a vigorous offensive with the fleet, whereby he had established a command of the Ægean Sea, and continually menaced the Turkish possessions that lay upon its waters. In this way he had rendered their communications with the besieging force in Crete in the last degree precarious, and at the same time compelled the Sultan to dissipate his strength in innumerable garrisons. In the present campaign the Venetian fleet was to act in two divisions—one blockading the Dardanelles and the other laying siege to Malvoisia in the Morea, the Turkish advanced base of supply for Crete. Under these circumstances it is clear that, if the Turkish army before Candia could receive relief from the Barbary side, the task of the Venetians would be seriously complicated, while, on the other hand, if Blake could succeed in crushing the combined fleet of the tributary states, he would give the Venetians the practical ordering of the campaign.<sup>1</sup> How could he hesitate? In the whole conduct of his life he was a zealot of childlike faith, whose every utterance shows that an intimate communion with the Deity was as real a thing to him as it was to Cromwell. Left practically to his own initiative, he had been trusting, as we have seen, that the Providence of God would lead him on, and he can no longer have doubted the purpose of the gale which had driven him back to Leghorn.

Full of this great intention Blake lay chafing at his moorings till the end of the month. When at last, on January 31, the weather permitted him to get clear, he had

<sup>1</sup> Daru, *Hist. de Venise* (ed. 1853), vol. v. cap. i. Blake's despatches of March 14, 1655, in *Add. MSS.* 9304 and Thurloe, iii. 232.

thus less than a fortnight in hand, and, ill-provisioned as he was, he determined in his impatience to make a dash straight for his objective without calling at Trapani for supplies as he had intended. So rapid was his movement that in a week he was before Tunis, but it was only to encounter another disappointment. The first thing he learnt was that his information was false. There was no concentration, and the chance of the resounding exploit on which he was bent was gone. Still the simple words of his despatch which cover his disappointment leave no doubt of his intention, and he must be given all credit for the high purpose he had formed. It was the true Nelson touch, and nothing in Nelson's life marks more indisputably the spirit of the great commander. For such men it is not enough to excuse inertness by resting on orders that are indistinct, timid, or lacking in thoroughness. He perceives the broad stream of policy on which his superiors are floating, and dares to show them, even before they clearly see themselves, the course they should steer. In this great spirit he came near to hurling the new force of his country against the East in the old quarrel, and raising its fallen name higher in the face of Europe than any other means could have achieved. It was prestige he was sent forth to seek, and only by some such heroic stroke could it be truly won. So it was we see him, full of the love of God and his country, raging round the Mediterranean to seek a foeman worthy of the weapon he had tempered, and finding none.

Still, in spite of his disappointment, a crumb of comfort remained. In the neighbouring Porto Farina, the new naval headquarters of the Tunisian state, lay nine war ships, and Blake despatched a squadron of four frigates, under Captain Hill of the 'Worcester' (his usual cruiser commodore), across the gulf to blockade them. Having

thus secured the ground, he proceeded with the prosaic business on which he had nominally been sent out. His actual instructions, so far as we know them, were to demand the restitution of a ship called the 'Princess,' with an indemnity, and the release of all British captives. It can hardly be said that justice was entirely on the admiral's side. In 1646 a man called Edmund Casson had been sent out by the Parliamentary Government on a mission to the Barbary states to negotiate the release of English prisoners and a treaty to secure the immunity of English vessels. Such a treaty he successfully concluded with Algiers, but his negotiations with Tunis appear to have been spoilt by the conduct of an English captain, who, having agreed to transport a company of Turkish troops to Smyrna, took the first opportunity of selling them to the Malta galleys. Another English envoy had done his best to secure their release, but the Knights demanded a price beyond his means, and the Bey remained rather aggravated than appeased. It was but natural then that, in answer to the English demands (although he was ready, as he professed, to negotiate a treaty for the future), he absolutely refused to give any satisfaction for the past.

Now Blake's instructions further directed him, 'in case of refusal of right, to seize, surprise, sink, and destroy all ships and vessels belonging to the kingdom of Tunis he should meet.' Such was the authority that Elizabeth was wont to give Drake and his fellow admirals, and which James gave Mansell. The same doubts which had so often troubled them at once arose in Blake's mind. Was he, or was he not, entitled to sink the same ships in their own ports? He could not solve the doubt; but, finding negotiation useless, promptly stood across to Porto Farina. The presence of his blockading frigates had caused the nine men-of-war to be unrigged

and disarmed, and hauled close inshore under the castle, while other batteries had been erected and armed with their guns to further protect them. An entrenched camp had also been formed during the blockade; and when Blake moved, the Bey marched down and occupied it with some thousands of horse and foot. The position was thus a very difficult one to deal with—so difficult indeed that the Council of War decided that, whatever the decision might ultimately be as to how far their instructions entitled them to go, it was impossible to attack with the fleet in the condition it was. They had but five days' drink, and very little bread. It was therefore decided to leave six frigates, under Captain Stayner of the 'Plymouth,' to continue the blockade, and to carry the rest of the fleet to Cagliari for supplies.<sup>1</sup>

On February 22, therefore, they sailed, 'meaning to give them a more sudden and hotter visit,' and four days later anchored at Cagliari. Here they found the four frigates that had been sent to cruise round the Balearic islands. For their pains they had to show a smart French frigate of fifteen guns, called the 'Fame,' and to report they had driven ashore and sold to the Governor of Majorca another of thirty guns, called the 'Percy,' a well-known English-built ship.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Blake's despatches in Thurloe, iii. 232, and *Add. MSS.* 9304; Gardiner, *Commonwealth*, iii. 376 *et seq.* The frigates detailed for the blockade were 'Plymouth,' 'Kent,' 'Newcastle,' 'Foresight,' 'Taunton,' and 'Mermaid.' As the 'Plymouth' was the only third rate, I assume Stayner was in command.

<sup>2</sup> This vessel, under the name 'La Persée,' is the subject of one of the heroic traditions of the French navy. Her captain was a Knight of Malta, named Valbelle, who had served with distinction in the Candiotte war and had been one of Guise's captains in the late expedition. During the retreat before Blake he was hailed by an English ship which had—so the story goes—'the cool audacity to demand a salute, as a right due to the masters of the sea,' whereupon Valbelle boarded the Englishman 'with heroic ardour, trode the insolent aggressors under his feet, carried off their flag, . . . and after frightful carnage made himself master of the enemy's ship. Un-

These two captures brought the tale of French prizes up to seven, and after more than a fortnight spent in vain efforts to get sufficient bread, Blake had to send the 'Hampshire' and 'Maidstone' frigates to Genoa to get more and careen. Two other frigates, the 'Langport' and 'Diamond,' were to return to Majorca on the same errand, with orders to sweep the trade route as far as Alicante or Cape Palos, and then proceed also to Genoa. Thence the 'Langport' was to bring on what bread had been obtained, and the other three were to resume the

willing, however, to embitter too far the relations between the two countries, he abandoned his prize on the demand of the English commandant.' This story, incredible as it seems, receives some corroboration from Blake's remark that she was 'well known,' suggesting she was a marked ship; and also from Mazarin's instructions to Bordeaux, wherein he told him to insist on the fact as evidence of his goodwill, that Guise had restored an English prize he had taken (Mazarin to Bordeaux, January 2, 1655, Thurloe, iii. 41; same to same, January 16, Guizot, ii. App. xiv. 510). All the captains of the English navy—so the French story proceeds—were filled with extreme irritation at Valbelle's exploit and sought to wipe out the disgrace. On February 13–23, 1655, 'a division of four vessels—one of 60 guns and the others of 36 to 44—under the Chevalier Banks, found her between Majorca and Cabrera.' Then follows the story of another heroic action, in which Valbelle fought all the four ships and finally ran himself ashore, and even then so maltreated the nearest Englishman that he forced the captain to accept an armistice. The following day the English broke their agreement and attacked again. For three days more Valbelle defended himself, till finally the Spanish Viceroy, overcome with admiration, allowed him and his crew to land without being treated as prisoners of war (Guérin, *Hist. Maritime*, iii. 103–5).

The 'Chevalier Banks' I cannot account for. The squadron detached from Leghorn consisted of the 'Langport,' 50 (Capt. Roger Cuttance), the 'Hampshire,' 34 (Capt. Benjamin Blake), the 'Diamond,' 36 (Capt. John Harman), and the 'Maidstone,' 32 (Capt. Thomas Adams). Blake's report on the 'Percy' affair is that, 'not being able to possess themselves of it, being also extremely battered and spoiled, they took 3,000 dollars of the Governor of that place, who was likewise upon agreement to be at the charge of sending home all the French in her, which were 300 in number' (Thurloe, iii. 232). In another despatch (*Add. MSS.* 9304) he says his men were about to burn her when the Governor made this offer. On these accounts we may safely allow Valbelle the credit of a very fine defence, after all allowance is made for the obvious and quite unnecessary exaggerations and absurdities of the French story.

cruising station about the Balearic islands. The final rendezvous was to be Alcudia Bay, in Majorca, preparatory to a demonstration on the coast of Provence.<sup>1</sup> On March 15, with the rest of the fleet, he weighed again for Tunis 'to put an end to the business there,' as he wrote, 'which we shall endeavour to do with all the resolution and circumspection which we can, as God shall direct us, it being a business of manifold concerns and interests, and subject to divers consequents and constructions.' Seeing the condition of affairs, this was no more than truth. While at Cagliari he had received by his ketch a letter in the Protector's own hand, giving him certain commands. What they were is unknown. The despatches accompanying it were dated January 15 and 29—just a month after Penn had sailed for the West Indies.<sup>2</sup> There may therefore have been a warning of the coming war with Spain, but the indications are rather that it referred to the transport of some horses which the Protector had instructed Longland to purchase for him in Italy. What Blake had in his mind was almost certainly the possibility of his action involving England in the Candote war, and risking the Levant trade with Turkey. How grave was his anxiety his action proves. On

<sup>1</sup> Blake's despatch, March 14, 1655, *Add. MSS.* 9304.

<sup>2</sup> So the despatch in *Add. MSS.* 9304. That in Thurloe, iii. 232, only mentions the receipt of one dated January 25. The letters dealt mainly with the political crisis at home and Cromwell's summary dissolution of Parliament on January 22. The Admiral's reception of the news disposes of the Royalist legend that he was politically opposed to Cromwell's methods. 'I was not surprised with the intelligence,' he wrote to Thurloe, 'the slow proceedings and awkward motions of that assembly giving great cause to the fact it would come to some such period; and I cannot but exceedingly wonder that there should yet remain so strong a spirit of prejudice and animosity in the minds of men who profess themselves most affectionate patriots as to postpone the necessary ways and means for preservation of the Commonwealth. . . . But blessed be the Lord who hath hitherto delivered and doth still deliver us.'

March 21 he anchored again before the Goleta of Tunis. Here he received, and, strangely enough, by a French ship, another 'great packet of letters,' which must have been written early in February. Again, we do not know their contents, but on the following day another French ship, which had withdrawn into the Goleta, came boldly out and anchored in the middle of the English fleet with impunity, 'from which,' says an officer, 'we judged the General's letters related to a league with France.' As a matter of fact, when the despatches were written, Bordeaux was very hopeful about a treaty. In view of Penn's expedition against the Spanish Indies, it was almost as necessary to Cromwell as to Mazarin. Mazarin had declared himself eager for it, and had told Bordeaux to dwell on the recent restitution of English prizes as a mark of his sincerity. It is very possible, therefore, that Blake at this time did receive orders to suspend his operations against French commerce.

He could thus give his undivided energies to the Barbary states. At Tunis the situation was unchanged, and he once more sent in the Protector's demands. But Blake's movements had only served to harden the Bey's heart. 'We found them,' wrote the admiral, 'more wilful and untractable than before, adding to their obstinacy much insolence and contumely, denying us all commerce of civility.' They had refused him leave to water, and had fired upon his boats, and at last Blake lost his patience. 'These barbarous provocations,' says he, 'did so far work on our spirits that we judged it necessary for the honour of our fleet, our nation, and religion, seeing they would not deal with us as friends, to make them feel us as enemies: and it was therefore resolved in Council of War to endeavour the firing of their ships in Porto Farina.' The die being cast, he once more retired

to Trapani with the double object of filling up with water and lulling the Bey into security. There he remained a week, and on the afternoon of April 3 was back again off the port. All was as before. The Tunis vessels were still lying under the batteries, a pistol-shot from shore, the coast was lined with musketeers, and some sixty guns frowned from the castle and works. A final council was called to consider the formidable task; but first, in the true Cromwellian spirit, they 'sought the Lord by prayer.' The answer quickly came. It was to attack and burn the ships on the morrow where they lay.<sup>1</sup>

At the first glimmer of dawn the ships began to take up their allotted stations. 'The fourth-rate frigates,' we are told, 'were first under sail, and went near the castle and works.' Captain Cobham in the 'Newcastle' led the way, followed by the rest of the fourth and fifth rates, and all came to anchor, says another officer, 'near the Turks' nine ships, who lay close to the castle and the forts by it.'<sup>2</sup> Badiley, the vice-admiral, in the 'Andrew,' with Stayner in the 'Plymouth,' then went in, quickly followed by the admiral with the rest of the heavier ships, the 'Worcester,' 'Unicorn,' 'Bridgwater,' and 'Success,' and then six second and third rates. 'All anchored,' we are told, 'just against the body of the castle, within musket-shot, and began to play their broadsides.' The whole evolution was performed with perfect ease, 'the Lord,' as Blake said, 'being pleased to

<sup>1</sup> See a letter, April 9 and 10, from the fleet in a tract called *A Book of the Continuation of Foreign Passages*, 1657, Brit. Mus. E. 1954 (3) 4to. The other main authorities are Blake's despatch, April 18, in Thurloe, iii. 390, and Weale's *Journal*. An excellent chart and note on the alteration of the coast is in Gardiner, *Commonwealth &c.* iii. 381.

<sup>2</sup> *Continuation of Foreign Passages*. It gives the fullest details of the ships engaged. Seven vessels, it says, followed the 'Newcastle,' viz. 'Kent,' 'Foresight,' 'Amity,' 'Princess Maria,' 'Pearl,' 'Mermaid,' and 'Merlin.' Weale adds the 'Ruby' and 'Diamond.'

favour us with a gentle gale off the sea, which cast all the smoke upon them and made our work the more easy.'

It will be seen that with the force at his command Blake must have been able to develop a fire formidable beyond any that Mansell had the power to do in his similar attempt at Algiers. Still for a time, as they said, it was very hot work. As the sun rose, Badiley answered the first gun from the castle and the action rapidly became general. Soon after the advanced squadron was anchored, the 'boats of execution' put off and, under cover of the storm of shot and the blinding clouds of smoke, rowed for the dismantled ships. At their approach the Tunisian crews sprang overboard and swam ashore. The panic spread to the advanced works, and in a short time the enemy had all taken refuge in the castle. Then one by one the ships were boarded, fires were kindled in each of them, and by eight o'clock the whole were blazing. By this time the fire of the castle began to slacken. 'We played very thick,' wrote an officer, 'for four or five hours.' By eleven o'clock it was completely mastered, and Blake had marked another point in the progress of naval science.

It was not the first time, as is often said, that a fleet had successfully engaged shore batteries. Landings had often been covered in this way before, and in 1602, when Sir Richard Leveson and Sir William Monson had captured the great carrack in Cezimbra Road, they had done much the same thing. But in these cases it was the landing that had led to the evacuation of the shore works. The only exception was Cezimbra Road, and there the fleet had been able to work under sail. This was the first time that ships had anchored close under powerful batteries and almost immediately crushed them by sheer weight of metal. For this is what had been

done. In vain the enemy, as the boats drew off, attempted to regain their abandoned works. They could scarcely fire a gun. As the frigates began to warp out they tried to reach their flaming vessels, but a few shots from the heavy ships frustrated every attempt. The wind continued light, and when the work was done the admiral 'put out his flag of defiance and the whole fleet warped out almost as easily as it had gone in.' The gallant Badiley as vice-admiral was the first to anchor under the castle and he was the last to weigh, defiantly keeping his station till the doomed vessels were beyond saving. In the English ships scarcely a man was hit, showing that the enemy's fire must have been mastered from the first. The loss in the boats was more serious. It is given as from twenty-five to thirty killed, and forty to eighty wounded; but all, or nearly all, was the effect of musketry from the shore trenches. All day they watched the holocaust, and when night fell the flames still lit up the field of victory. So the work was done, and well might an exultant officer call it 'a piece of service that has not been paralleled in these parts of the world.'<sup>1</sup>

Blake's own note was much more modest. He could see little in his exploit but his extraordinary luck. After commenting on the insignificance of his loss he writes: 'It is also remarkable to us that shortly after our getting forth, the wind and weather changed, and continued very stormy for many days, so that we could not have effected our business had not the Lord afforded that nick of time in which it was done.' His grateful words might well make critics pause before they treat with contumely Mansell's failure at Algiers. Blake's apparently irresolute movements previous to the attack had been exactly the same as his; both were embarrassed by the same indefinite

<sup>1</sup> Weale's *Journal*.

instructions; and Blake's methods might almost have been founded on Mansell's, so exactly similar were they. If Mansell had only had Blake's luck with the wind—if, instead of a calm and rain after the ships were set on fire, he had had a fresh breeze as Blake had—he must have succeeded as Blake did, and the Mediterranean would have rung with an exploit whose consequences for James's prestige at that critical moment it is impossible to measure.

A comparison of the two exploits may be insisted on with profit, and pressed without disparagement to either officer. It rather serves to bring out the merits of each, and to give some light on the extent of risk that a naval commander may legitimately take. The cardinal difference between the two exploits—and it is that which has obscured their comparative merits—is that Blake entered the harbour and Mansell did not. Each was right in the particular case. We do not know the exact strength of the enemy in either case, but we do know the comparative value of the two English fleets, and we may safely say that the defences of Porto Farina were at least as inferior to those of Algiers as Blake's fleet was superior to Mansell's. It is clear that if Blake had been unable to come out when the work was done, it would have mattered little. So long as his overwhelming force remained in the harbour not a Tunisian gun could have been manned. For Mansell the inability to withdraw would have meant destruction. Had the chances been otherwise, he too doubtless would have gone in; but clearly the true risk for him to take was to attempt the firing of the ships without trying to silence the batteries. This he successfully did, and his boats retired. When Blake had done so much he also retired and withdrew to a similar position to that which Mansell held throughout. In the one case the

enemy's ships continued to burn, in the other they did not, owing mainly at least to an incalculable chance of the fickle Mediterranean weather. It is not right that this difference—though it was all the difference between failure and success—should divide the credit of the two operations as widely as it has done. In appraising the judgment of the two admirals it would be difficult to know where to bestow the prize. Blake used an overwhelming force with just boldness while Mansell with just reserve husbanded one that was inadequate. It is needless to decide; for this is certain—that there is as much true instruction for a naval officer in the one exploit as in the other.

Complete as was Blake's success at Porto Farina, it earned him nothing tangible. Having given the Bey his lesson, he at once resumed his blockade of the Goleta and repeated his demands. The Bey remained absolutely inflexible. He refused even to treat unless Blake came ashore. The destroyed ships, he said, were the Sultan's, and with him the English would have to deal. Blake was in despair. He had gained no concession, he had not released a single captive, and yet there was nothing to do but retire once more to Cagliari. There he wrote an anxious despatch to excuse his conduct. 'Seeing it has pleased God,' he said, 'to justify us herein, I hope his Highness will not be offended at it, nor any who regard duly the honour of our nation; altho' I expect to hear of many complaints and clamours of interested men.' He meant of course the Levant merchants, and in his anxiety on their account he hurried off a merchantman, which happened to be in the Goleta, with letters to the Ambassador at Constantinople to explain the provocation under which he had acted. He had to own how hazardous his exploit had been. 'I confess,' he says, 'I did awhile

much hesitate myself, and was balanced in my thoughts, until the barbarous carriage of those pirates did turn the scale.' Whatever the consequences to himself and British trade, the work was done, and it was time to turn to other matters.

His programme was as yet incomplete. Guise's fleet was still on his mind, and so was Algiers, whither he now meant to proceed in order to get a confirmation of Casson's treaty and fill up with water. The work was not likely to take him long. His exploit had already told. Within a week of it, while still before Tunis, he had received a deferential invitation from the Dey of Algiers to negotiate.<sup>1</sup> Thus he saw his way to gathering the first-fruits of his victory, and then returning without delay to his original object. 'From Algiers,' he wrote, while putting his fleet in order at Cagliari, 'we intend, if God enable us, to sail to Majorca, and from thence to range the coast of Provence to attend the French fleet in our way home, so long as our victuals will admit.' From this it is clear that his orders to deal gently with French commerce were not long-lived. In the last week in March Longland had sent him on two packets from London, which he must have received at Cagliari, to change his note. When these despatches were written the French negotiations had again hung fire. Cromwell absolutely refused to abandon his claim as the head of the Protestant faith to interfere on behalf of the Huguenots if he judged fit. It was a claim Louis could not possibly admit. Bordeaux was constantly asking for his passports, and the Protector was to all appearance quite prepared for a war with both France and Spain in the cause of the Reformation. So far then

<sup>1</sup> *Continuation of Foreign Passages.* This information is added on April 10 as a postscript after the description of the action written on the 9th, and dated 'from Tunis Road.'

from being debarred from injuring French commerce, Blake must have been authorised to proceed on the original intention, and threaten the ports of Toulon and Marseilles, where a powerful expedition was being prepared for resuming the offensive in Catalonia. The incalculable force that lay in the Mediterranean squadron was thus again emphasised. Up till the very last moment it enabled Cromwell to play his double game. On the one hand it was a lever to force France into peace, and on the other a spell to lull Spain into security. Even as Blake acknowledged the subtle orders, Penn's attack on San Domingo was in full swing, and the final instructions to the Mediterranean squadron were speeding southward by sea and land.

It was on April 18 that Blake, still believing the Toulon fleet was his objective, sailed from Cagliari to Algiers, where he arrived in ten days. His stay lasted barely a fortnight; but so great was the effect of his lesson to Tunis that it was enough to do his work and do it well. So far from finding any resistance, he was received with marked respect. Victuals, water, everything he asked for was readily furnished. Casson's treaty was renewed, with additional clauses extending its benefits to all British subjects, and in pursuance of it all who were then in captivity were given up on payment of their value. The men of the fleet were even permitted to ransom out of their pay a number of Dutchmen who swam off to the ships. It is part of the legend that Blake did much the same at Tripoli. It is certain that before receiving Cromwell's last orders he had intended to do so, but the call that had reached him at Cagliari left no time to spare for the work.<sup>1</sup> At Algiers he did not delay an hour

<sup>1</sup> See his despatch of March 14, *Add. MSS.* 9304: 'After Tunis we intend to go for Tripoli.'

longer than was necessary. So soon as victuals and captives were on board he swept on to the Balearic islands, where his three frigates were busy with French commerce.<sup>1</sup> On May 14, four days after he had left Algiers, he anchored at Formentara and began to take in wood; but next day, before he had done, it came on to blow and he had to make sail. On the morrow, as he stood off and on, he was joined by the 'Elias,' which was bringing wine and bread from Naples, and with her were a victualler called the 'Betty' and his ketch. His plans immediately changed. After another day spent in taking in the stores, two small frigates were detached to Alicante and Cartagena to take in the guns that were there, belonging presumably to Rupert's beaten ships. Their orders were to follow him, not to Toulon, but to Gibraltar and Cadiz. This sudden change of move, of which there is no hint before, admits of but one explanation. He had heard by despatches, which Longland had forwarded, that Spain, not France, was to be his enemy, and instead of operating on the coast of Provence he was under orders for the coast of Andalusia to intercept the Plate fleet.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, iii. 487.

<sup>2</sup> On June 13 Cromwell wrote to Blake that he had sent him orders about the Plate fleet overland via Leghorn, and also by a ketch direct by sea (Thurloe, iii. 547). The question is whether the orders were sent early enough to have reached Blake at Formentara by May 16. Cromwell's words show that they were sent off before April 28, as Dr. Gardiner points out (*Commonwealth &c.* iii. 392 n.), but they were probably sent much earlier. A ketch for the purpose was called for by the Admiralty Committee on March 26 (*Dom. Cal.* 452). There was some delay in fitting her out, but presumably the orders were ready and duplicates were sent off by land very soon after this call—that is, early in April. Dr. Gardiner, however, believed they were entrusted to Capt. Nixon of the 'Centurion,' a fourth-rate frigate, about the end of April, and that he landed the messenger somewhere in the Mediterranean and sent him to Leghorn overland. If this was so Blake cannot have received the orders at Formentara on May 17. But the letters which on May 1 Vice-Admiral Jordan says he had given to Nixon cannot have been there sent overland. Nixon, with the 'Centurion' and 'Dragon,'

Of Blake's immediate movements there is no record, but in ten days' time the two frigates which had been detached to Alicante and Cartagena, having loaded up the guns, came up with the main body of the fleet as it was in the act of passing the Straits. The reason Blake had been so long on the way is not clear, but there is an explanation worth suggesting, as it involves the possible truth of one of the most striking episodes of the legend.

Bishop Burnet relates that when 'Blake with the fleet happened to be at Malaga, before he made war on Spain,' some of his seamen went ashore, and, meeting the Host, began to jeer at the people for making obeisance. At the instigation of the priests, the crowd set upon them and sent them back to their ships very severely handled. Once on board the men complained to Blake, and the admiral promptly sent on shore a trumpet to demand the surrender of the ringleader of the priests. The Governor replied he had no jurisdiction over priests; whereupon Blake declared that that was no concern of his, but that if the offender was not given up within three hours he would burn the town. The priest was sent. Blake repri-

sailed as convoy to the victuallers which Cromwell distinctly says he sent off *after* the overland orders had gone, and these vessels met Blake at Cadiz (Thurloe, iii. 547, *Dom. Cal.* viii. pp. 468, 471). The despatches Nixon carried must have been those which Blake refers to in his cypher despatch of June 12 as 'the secret instructions sent by your Highness referring me to a former instruction touching the Silver fleet' (Thurloe, iii. 541).

These 'former instructions' must have been those sent off by Longland from Leghorn on May 1 by the 'Warwick' pinnace to Alcudia Bay (Thurloe, iii. 422). This is just the time he would have received letters from London, sent off overland at the end of March, the post time being, as appears from his correspondence, about four to five weeks. The probability is that, on his way to Formentara from Algiers, Blake detached his despatch ketch to Alcudia Bay to bring on anything he found at the rendezvous, that she found there the 'Warwick' pinnace, the 'Elias,' and the 'Betty,' and thus it was that her arrival at Formentara with the 'Warwick's' despatches was followed by Blake's sudden change of plan.

manded him for not having lodged a formal complaint of the seamen's conduct. Had he done so they should have been punished. He would suffer no man of his to insult the established religion of a country, but at the same time he would have all men know that an Englishman was only to be punished by an Englishman. And with that he let the priest go. 'Cromwell,' Burnet adds, 'was much delighted with this, and read the letters in Council with great satisfaction, and said he hoped he should make the name of an Englishman as great as ever that of a Roman had been.'<sup>1</sup> The story may be a pure myth, but Burnet can hardly have invented it, and all we know of Blake's movements renders it quite possible that something of the kind really occurred. We know, moreover, that when he called at Malaga on his way out, one of his boats for some unexplained reason had been detained and that the fleet sailed without it. It is on the assumption that the Bishop's story related to this visit that modern scepticism has rejected it.<sup>2</sup> But it is almost certain that Blake visited Malaga a second time on his way out of the Straits. He was ten days—that is, from May 17 to May 27—getting from Formentara to Gibraltar, and, as we know from the log of the 'Amity,' one of the two frigates detached for the guns, they met with calms and baffling airs from the 25th to the morning of the 27th as they turned westward.<sup>3</sup> The fleet could not have passed the Straits in such weather, and Malaga was the ordinary place for vessels to lie while waiting for a wind to carry them out. Hence nothing is more probable than that Blake lay there three days at this time, and while doing so he may well have demanded redress either for the previous

<sup>1</sup> *History of his Own Times*, i. 80 (138).

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, *Commonwealth &c.* iii. 373, n.

<sup>3</sup> Weale's *Journal*.

detention of his boat or for some new insult to his flag. In any case there is nothing in the known facts of the case to justify an out-of-hand rejection of the bishop's story, and Blake may still be credited with his famous vindication of his country's honour.

It was the last act of that memorable cruise. With admirable skill, and the shameless craft which was then the foundation of all foreign politics both at home and abroad, Cromwell had extracted from it the utmost possible advantage. By permitting Blake's last move on Toulon he had blinded the Spaniards' eyes till the very last moment. Blake had scarcely reached Cadiz before it was known that Penn's fleet was in the West Indies. Yet in the previous week the Governor of Alicante and Cartagena had been handing over Rupert's guns to the English captains with effusive compliments. Even at Cadiz, when Blake asked leave to careen his ships in the port, orders came down from Madrid that it was to be permitted; but, having probably in the meanwhile learnt the news that had come across the Atlantic, he prudently declined the invitation when it arrived. It was safer to anchor off Rota, and there in the mouth of the bay he lay quietly revictualling before the Spaniards' eyes from the storeships that had arrived from England. No one could doubt what his business was. He had come there, every one said, to intercept the treasure fleet if Penn missed it, and by the King's order incessant prayers were offered for its safety in the monasteries and convents.<sup>1</sup>

Such were indeed his orders, and a little later they were supplemented by instructions to prevent any relief getting out to the West Indies to interfere with Penn. They were accompanied by the Protector's hearty approval of what his admiral had done at Tunis. He acknow-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Percy Wright to Thurloe (Thurloe, iii. 542).

ledged the good hand of God in it, as Blake had pointed out; but at the same time he added: 'I think myself obliged to notice your courage and good conduct therein, and do esteem that you have done a very considerable service to this Commonwealth.'<sup>1</sup> For the present he was destined to do no more. Though he remained on the coast all the summer, the treasure fleet did not come, and no Indian relief put out. It is true a fleet hastily gathered and equipped in Cadiz did get to sea, but war had not been declared and it avoided an action. Blake on his part did not press one, since he had no authority to attack a fleet not bound for the Indies. By the end of summer the admiral with his fifty-six years was so broken by the long strain to which he had been exposed that he could not conceal his condition from the Protector. Cromwell at once gave him leave to stay out or come home as he pleased, and on October 6, with his fleet as worn and strained as himself, he anchored in the Downs.

<sup>1</sup> This letter of approval, in answer to Blake's apology for attacking Porto Farina without orders, is clearly the origin of the widely believed story that Blake received a pardon from Cromwell. Practically he did, and the story can hardly be said to be a 'pure fiction' (Gardiner, *First Dutch War*, i. 24, n.).

## CHAPTER XVIII

### CROMWELL'S WAR WITH SPAIN

THE remarkable success of Blake's memorable demonstration gave the course of English Mediterranean power a new and stronger impulse. Henceforth it moves in a fuller flood. The main channel becomes clearly recognisable, and the slenderer streams that go to swell its bulk lose their importance. While we traced the sources, each rivulet—the small beginnings that make great ends—had to be examined with patient scrutiny that to each might be justly apportioned its relative share. But as they unite in a wider bed the course becomes clearer and we may travel down it at greater speed. The rivulets that formerly were parent streams become mere tributaries that deserve no more than passing notice. It is with the broad features of our progress that we are now concerned, and these we may observe as we are carried ever more rapidly down the increasing current.

Cromwell's Spanish war was little concerned with action within the Straits. It was conceived in the Elizabethan spirit, and in the Elizabethan spirit it was waged. It was mainly an Ocean war, and yet the lessons of Blake's cruise were not wholly forgotten. The great contribution of that cruise to naval thought has never been sufficiently recognised. It was not his swoop on Naples, his threat on Toulon, or even his exploit on the Tunis batteries that was its most memorable feature. It was those three impatient weeks—wasted weeks as it seemed—when at the

outset of his campaign he lay at Gibraltar fuming because the Brest division did not come. It was in those weeks, when men said he had thrown away his chance of striking Guise, that he had really defeated him, and not only him but Mazarin's whole Mediterranean policy. By seizing the Straits and holding them as he did, he had prevented Guise receiving at the essential moment the powerful addition to his force on which he relied for success; the heart was stricken out of the French commanders, their action was cramped and made abortive, and finally all hope of renewing the attempt after the first miscarriage was destroyed. It is true that a crushing blow at Guise's demoralised fleet would have made a more brilliant impression for the moment, but for deep and lasting influence on the balance of sea power it could not compare with what Blake's timely inaction achieved. By the still pressure of those lost weeks he had given to English naval strategy a priceless maxim. He had demonstrated the surpassing importance of Gibraltar and the inherent weakness of the French position. His action had brought naked to the surface the cardinal fact that the two seats of her naval energy were separated widely and by a narrow defile. It was clear that the prompt seizure or even the threat to seize this defile must place in English hands the initiative in any naval war with her old enemy. This then was the priceless secret that Blake had laid bare—the true significance of the Gibraltar defile. Priceless indeed it was to those who had eyes to see—for it is not too much to say that to this enduring geographical condition, more than to any other single factor, England owed her final domination of the sea.

It is not of course pretended that the truth was clearly recognised at once. The great facts of strategy have

always grown slowly to axiomatic solidity, rather by repeated example than sudden precept. It is one of the most remarkable features of Drake's wide grasp of naval problems that he was able to formulate his intuitions as clearly as he did. Blake may have done as much in the present case, but so little that he wrote has survived that we cannot tell. All we know is that at the very next opportunity the idea recurred. Spain was now to find herself in the same position as France. In her case also the two main seats of her naval energy were separated by the Gibraltar defile. In the days of the old war this had not been so, and this was no doubt one reason why the Elizabethan admirals had neglected Gibraltar. At that time Spain held Portugal and had no sailing navy in the Mediterranean. Consequently the central point of her naval power lay not at Gibraltar but at Cape St. Vincent. To the north of it lay Lisbon and the ports of Galicia, Biscay, and Flanders; to the south, Cadiz and Seville, the great seats of the American marine, and such Italian ports as could contribute to her oceanic strength. St. Vincent then, as Drake saw, was the true point of division. Here it was he performed one of his most daring and miraculous exploits in seizing the Cape, and throughout the war his pupils continued to regard St. Vincent as the key of the Spanish position. But with the loss of Portugal and Osuna's foundation of a sailing navy in the Two Sicilies the centre of gravity shifted to Gibraltar. Thus, so soon as the new war breaks out, we see the neglected idea of the Scottish soldier of fortune being forced again to the front, and the Straits assuming an importance which they had never enjoyed before.

As in the case of Drake's descent on the West Indies and the Spanish Main in 1585, formal war did not immediately follow the attack of Penn and Venables on

Hispaniola and Jamaica. Throughout the autumn and winter of 1655 the Spaniards made earnest efforts to come to an arrangement; but on the English demands for the religious exterritoriality of their merchantmen in Spanish ports and for the open door in the Indies neither side would give way. It was the old quarrel which James's premature peace had left unsettled, and it had to be fought out. Though war was not actually proclaimed by Spain till February 1656, a powerful fleet had been brought forward in the English ports during the winter months. Blake was to command it, but as his health was far from restored he begged for a colleague. To his serious dissatisfaction, as it is said, Cromwell appointed his young friend Edward Montague, better known in Restoration days as the Earl of Sandwich. This brilliant and attractive gentleman was one of Cromwell's mistakes. A cousin of the Earl of Manchester, the first Parliamentary Commander-in-Chief, he had thrown in his lot with the popular cause and been given premature military preferment. After Manchester's retirement his favour continued. When barely yet twenty years of age he had received the command of a regiment in the New Model army, and had fought at Naseby and the siege of Bristol. Though, as Clarendon says, he had the reputation of 'a very stout and sober young man,' there is no sign of his having particularly distinguished himself, nor indeed of his having taken any further part in the struggle till Cromwell's rise to supreme power again attracted him. In August 1654 he had been appointed one of the Commissioners of the Treasury, and thus he was not yet thirty, with absolutely no experience of the sea and very little of war at all, when he was suddenly thrust up to share the position which Blake had so hardly earned. The explanation of the appointment must be sought in Crom-

well's personal affection and Montague's own pecuniary difficulties. Pepys, his most ardent admirer and devoted client, says he was heavily in debt at the time, and the main object of the coming campaign was the capture of the Spanish treasure fleet. The result of the appointment was from our present point of view a very striking modification of the action which Cromwell had in his mind.

As usual, the admirals' instructions are not extant and we have again to gather them from their proceedings. The fleet was a very powerful one. At its head, bearing the flag of both the admirals, was the 'Naseby,' a new frigate-built first-rate of over 1600 tons and 80 guns, just launched at Woolwich and the pride of the Protectorate navy. Next her was the famous 'Resolution,' which was originally intended for Lawson's flag; but at the last moment, for political reasons, he was superseded by Badiley. No list of the fleet exists, but it certainly consisted of not less than forty-five sail and included at least eight second-rates and several third-rates.<sup>1</sup>

Owing to the difficulty of manning so large a force and other reasons it was not till the end of March that the admirals cleared from Torbay. The result was that the treasure fleet got into Cadiz before them, and their chance of a rich capture was gone till the next one was due in the summer. They were thus thrown back on their secondary objects, one of which, it becomes clear, was to establish a footing on Spanish territory at some point

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, v. 69. Montague, on May 20, says there were sixteen frigates before Cadiz and twenty-seven sail at Tangier, including fire-ships and victuallers, besides at least two detached frigates, the 'Phoenix' and 'Sapphire.' From the minute-book of the Navy Commissioners (*Add. MSS.* 1905, f. 180) and Stayner's despatch (Thurloe, v. 399), and other scattered notices we know the fleet included, besides the first-rates 'Naseby' and 'Resolution,' the 'Andrew' (52), 'Rainbow' (54), 'Unicorn' (50), 'Plymouth' (54), 'Bridgewater' (52), 'Speaker' (64), 'George' (52)—all second-rates—and the 'Entrance' (40), 'Bristol' (44), 'Taunton' (40), and 'Jersey' (40), third-rates.

from which they could control the Straits and also prevent an expedition sailing from Cadiz for the recovery of Jamaica. On April 15, off the south-west of Portugal, Montague sent to Thurloe the unwelcome intelligence they had obtained. Not only the newly arrived treasure fleet but the galleons of the Indian Guard that had not already got away with the outward convoy were snug in the inmost recesses of Cadiz harbour, where it was almost impossible to attack them, and it was certain that the Spaniards did not mean, as had been hoped, to put out and risk an action. Further he says, 'They have sent two new regiments for Gibraltar, and the Duke of Medina is as active as he can [be] in securing the coast. You may well judge upon this intelligence what straights we are in to resolve our actings: what respect to have to the Indies, and what to attempt here worth the while.' The weather was too boisterous to hold a council, and it was not till five days later, on April 20, he was able to send the result of their deliberations.

After a long and careful reconnaissance it was decided that as things stood it was impossible to do anything at Cadiz. 'We had then,' Montague continues, 'some debate of Gibraltar, and there appeared no great mind to it in regard of hardness and want of land men formed, and officers and numbers of men too, all of which are real obstacles, as you may judge upon the description of the place [and] the number and quality of our men; and to say the truth the seamen are not for land service unless it be a sudden plunder. They are valiant, but not to be ruled and kept in any government ashore. Nor have your sea officers much stomach to fight ashore. Yet this work is not thrown aside on debate.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, v. 67. The word 'stomach' is there wrongly deciphered 'stoars.' It is written 90, 6, 19, 7, 9, 25, which reads 'stoack,' the 'm' being obviously omitted.

From these remarks of Montague's it is clear the idea of Gibraltar must have been in the admirals' minds from the first, and it was now to be pressed from home. A week later, on April 28, when Cromwell had learnt from independent sources how unfavourably events had fallen, he sent the admirals a series of suggestions for the future conduct of the campaign. First he proposed the destruction of the Spanish fleet where it lay, and, if this were found impracticable, an attempt on Cadiz itself.<sup>1</sup> Failing this he asks them to consider whether any other place be attemptable, especially that of the town and castle of Gibraltar, which, if possessed and made tenable by us, would it not be both an advantage to our trade and an annoyance to the Spaniard, and enable us without keeping so great a fleet on that coast, with six nimble frigates lodged there, to do the Spaniard more harm than by a fleet and ease our own charge? Here we have the first definite suggestion of the permanent occupation of Gibraltar as a naval station, and it comes from Cromwell's pen. With whom the idea originated we cannot tell. From Montague's concern for the place it would look as if it had been mentioned before they sailed. It is probable, as the custom was, that the designers of the campaign had had the records of similar expeditions before them and had noted Colonel Bruce's proposal to Lord Wimbledon in 1625. After the fleet sailed, however, the idea must for some reason have taken firmer hold of the Protector's mind and caused him to lay more stress upon it. So

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle here mistakes Cromwell's meaning. He does not contemplate the destruction of the Suazo bridge, close by which the whole Spanish force was concentrated, but suggests it may be neutralised as a line of relief for Cadiz by throwing entrenchments across the narrowest part of the island of Léon, and so cutting the road from the bridge to the town. It was so Essex had intended his attack to be covered in 1596, though by mistake the covering force went on to the bridge.

far indeed had the project gone with him that he is said to have formed a design for cutting through what is now the neutral ground and turning Gibraltar into an island.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, in search of water, the admirals had moved down to Tangier, leaving a division of fourteen frigates under the rear-admiral to blockade Cadiz. On their way they fell in with Cromwell's messenger, and ten days later, on May 13, after they had been lying at Tangier a week, Montague took two frigates across the Straits and made a close reconnaissance of the Rock in person. The result appears to have been that the more he looked at it the less he liked it. Still it could not be lightly abandoned. Cromwell's messenger was a certain Captain Lloyd, whom the Protector specially recommended as a person of integrity and in full possession of his ideas. In virtue of his verbal instructions Lloyd appears to have laid particular stress on the Gibraltar project. 'I perceive,' Montague wrote a week later, 'much desire that Gibraltar should be taken. My thoughts as to that are in short these: that the likeliest way to get it is by landing on the sand and quickly cutting it off between sea and sea, or so to secure our men there as they may hinder the intercourse of the town with the main, frigates lying near to assist them: and it is well known that Spain never victualleth a place for one month. This will want four or five thousand men, well formed and officered.' This he said was only his own private opinion, for a council had not yet been called to reconsider the question.

What Blake thought we cannot tell. We have none of his letters, and Montague never refers to him, and the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Sheeres, *A Discourse concerning the Mediterranean Sea &c.* (See *post*, vol. ii. pp. 79, 256.) To the edition of 1705, published immediately after the place was taken by Rooke, is a plan of it, and beside the neutral ground it has this note: 'Oliver Cromwell had a design on this place and would have cut this neck of land to make Gibraltar an island.'

impression we get is that he was either ill or too discontented for energetic action. Still there is reason to believe he was of Montague's opinion; at any rate it was decided not to make any attempt for the present, and Lloyd was sent back to report to Cromwell and receive his decision. It is possible that Montague's keen anxiety for prize money may have had a good deal to do with its postponement, but his reasons for not attempting the enterprise have much weight. There were certainly a number of soldiers in the fleet who had been shipped when seamen were found so hard to get and so disaffected; but, as Montague said, they were not 'formed'—that is, organised in companies and regiments for shore service—and they had no officers. Moreover, there was for the moment more pressing business in hand. Portugal was making difficulties over the ratification of the commercial treaty that had lately been concluded, and was suspected of an intention to throw in her lot with Spain. Montague was eager to seize the occasion as an excuse for capturing their homeward-bound Brazil convoy, which was just due. The English envoy at Lisbon had suggested this step, and it would seem that Lloyd had brought them authority to take it. By his hands or shortly afterwards they received definite instructions to make a demonstration before Lisbon with a peremptory demand for ratification. Much to Montague's disgust—and he made no secret of it—the effect was immediate. The Portuguese gave in and the Brazil fleet had to be left alone.

This business done, the admirals returned to Cadiz to see once more if Cromwell's suggestions could not be carried out.<sup>1</sup> But all seemed as hopeless as before. Both admirals were now agreed that 'nothing could be

<sup>1</sup> Pointer's letters (*Dom. Cal.* 373), June 16, 1656, and Montague's in *Thurloe*, v. 170, June 30.

done against the Spaniard.' Proposals were made for attempting Bayona in Galicia, and also for plundering Majorca, but Blake rejected them all. A hint had been received from home that if nothing could be done against the Spanish attitude of passive defence, the bulk of the fleet should be sent back. So lame a conclusion was little to Blake's mind. The fact was, his heart was set on completing the work he had but half done in his previous campaign, and a new cruise in the Mediterranean was at this time practically decided on. 'We have in a manner resolved,' wrote Montague on the last day of June, 'to appear in the Straits as high as Tripoli, and make a league with that place if we can, as also Tunis it may be.' The idea was to leave thirteen sail, including the largest ships, under Badiley to watch Cadiz and, after detaching a squadron against Salee, to proceed into the Mediterranean with the rest. It was a programme that promised far too little remuneration to please Montague. For all Cromwell's high-handed ways he did not venture to establish a commercial blockade of Cadiz. That which they were working was purely military, and practically unproductive. It broke Montague's heart to see the flourishing trade neutrals were doing with the enemy, 'which,' he lamented, 'we cannot hinder unless we should fight all the world.' Contraband they did attempt to stop, but with small effect and much loss of temper. 'It begets a deal of ill-will,' he added; 'in short, is the worst piece of work we meet with.' He was tired and disgusted with a service so different from what he had hoped, and he ended by urging that fifteen sail of nimble frigates kept permanently on the station, careening and watering at Lisbon, could do more than the fleet they had.

There were moral effects, however, of which he took no note. That powerful fleet and Blake's name produced

within the Mediterranean an impression which was deep and lasting, and which is for us the highest interest of the campaign. From Leghorn Longland was watching its effect with his characteristic acuteness. The possibilities the fleet possessed of striking in a score of different places kept every cabinet concerned in a wholesome state of anxious deference. As early as February Longland had written that on the first news that Blake was coming to sea again the Pope had had all the treasure of Loreto removed inland. In April he said he had sent down two thousand masons to fortify his coast towns. Others believed Blake's objective was Elba, Majorca, or Sicily, and generally the Italian Princes dreaded that the French ambitions were to be supported by the English fleet. The alarm moderated when Blake was known to be operating off Cadiz; but when, about midsummer, rumours came in that he was after all coming into the Mediterranean, it redoubled, and not without cause. At a moment when it seemed to the admirals they were most impotent, to us, who can view the whole field, they present a picture of striking potency, and afford us a notable demonstration of the power which a Mediterranean fleet can give to England for playing on the strings of Europe.

The trouble about ratifying the treaty with Portugal had been raised by the Church. The priests, scandalised at the article which gave religious extraterritoriality to the English merchants, took up an irreconcilable attitude, and to the English protests the King replied he was not king of the Church, and must refer the article for the Pope's consent. The successful demonstration of the fleet before Lisbon, which had compelled him to stand by his word, was thus for Cromwell and his men a direct blow at what they regarded as the cloven hoof of Rome. Ever since his accession, the new Pope,

Alexander VII., had fixed his policy on bringing about peace between France and Spain. The amazing military successes of the new King of Sweden, Charles Gustavus, were filling Catholic eyes with amazement. Another Gustavus Adolphus had arisen, and it was known that the no less terrible Cromwell was devoting all his energy to forming with him a great Protestant alliance against the supposed aggression of Rome. The Pope's idea was doubtless defensive. For him it was the Protestants who threatened aggression. His project of bringing peace to the faithful was, however, going but badly. The previous year he had seen France compelled to back Cromwell's intervention on behalf of the Vaudois Protestants, and now negotiations were actually on foot between Cromwell and Mazarin for an offensive alliance against Spain. When, to crown the danger, he saw Portugal on the brink of placing herself in the Protector's hands, it was but natural he should interfere, and, having failed and been found out, that he and every one else should expect retaliation.

When Cromwell as yet did not know what the end of the Vaudois affair was to be, he had drawn attention to the fact that at Nice and Villafranca, the territory of their persecutor, the Duke of Savoy, lay open to his fleet, and the Pope knew that his own Romagna was equally exposed. All kinds of stories went the round of Europe, pointing to the extreme anxiety that was felt at Rome. So soon as the new danger was grasped, it was said the Pope summoned the Ambassadors of Spain, Venice, Florence, and other great and powerful princes, and showed them how they were all threatened by the English fleet, with which that of Turkey was to be joined in secret alliance.<sup>1</sup> The sound of a couple of

<sup>1</sup> From Cologne, June 16, 1656 (Thurloe, v. 93).

Dutch ships saluting at Civita Vecchia threw Rome into a panic. It was said that Blake had seized the port. The Pope ordered his heavy artillery to be drawn out of the Castle of St. Angelo and planted in the streets, and the whole city to stand to arms. 'Whereby,' wrote Longland, in sending the report, 'you may please observe first, particularly, of whom the Pope is most afraid, which I cannot but take for a good omen, that God may please to give deliverance to Christendom by English arms.'<sup>1</sup>

As to the best use to which the idle fleet might be put, Longland had his own ideas. His eyes were still set on the heart of the Mediterranean. The Neapolitans, he said, were again in a state of great unrest, and so serious was their disaffection that he was certain, if Blake appeared in the bay and declared he had come to help the people to throw off the Spanish yoke, they would rise to a man. The mistake the French had twice made need not be repeated. He named a native nobleman, of vast wealth, great popularity, and English connections, who was ready to place himself at the head of the movement. Thus Naples might become a kingdom under a sovereign of its own, and be permanently lost to Spain, and that he declared would be a greater blow to her than the loss of all her Indies.<sup>2</sup>

None of these plans were destined to be carried out. No sooner had Blake resolved to enter the Mediterranean than strong easterly weather set in that held him at Cadiz. Instead of abating, it increased to a violent tempest, and so shattered the fleet that ten of the frigates had to be sent home. Still, on July 9, leaving Badiley with twelve sail before Cadiz, the admirals were able to weigh for the Straits with about fourteen sail. 'God

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, v. 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 93, June 6-16.

send us a good voyage,' Montague concluded his despatch, 'and good news from England at our return.' It was not, however, for Tunis or Tripoli that they were now bound. While awaiting Cromwell's decision about Gibraltar they had resolved to look out for a place on the Barbary side of the Straits which might serve their turn for careening and watering, 'in case,' as Montague wrote, 'you come to need it on another occasion.' He called the place they had their eye on Boremo or Buzema, by which he probably meant the island of Albucemas, on the Riff coast, about a hundred miles within the Straits.<sup>1</sup> 'Let me add by the way,' he further said, 'that if we could find such a place commodious, it were an unspeakable advantage to England to have a fort and possession thereof.' His expression should be remembered, for in it we seem to have the germ of the idea which was destined for years to replace that of Gibraltar. For the present nothing came of it, for the place was found wholly unsuitable. They did not, however, return empty-handed. Five frigates and a fire-ship had been detached to Malaga, under a Captain Smith, with a view of destroying some shipping which was known to be lying there. With his fire-ship he burnt two vessels lying under the mole, a galley, and half a dozen smaller craft. Then, having driven the Spaniards from the mole by his fire, he landed upon it, spiked the guns of the battery, and came off with the loss of six killed.

Returning to Cadiz and finding no orders from home, the admirals now went down to Salee to force a treaty and release captives. By September 1 they were

<sup>1</sup> See *post*, ii. 32, *note*. It is conceivable also that he meant the bay of Beuzus, an anchorage close to Ceuta and immediately opposite Gibraltar.

back again at Cadiz, and still without orders as to Gibraltar or sending home the larger ships. In a week they had to go on to Lisbon for water, leaving Stayner with a frigate squadron to maintain the blockade. Scarcely were their backs turned when it came on to blow from the west, and he had to stand out to sea. The same wind, as luck would have it, was bringing in the flota of Tierra Firme, which carried the treasure of Peru, and while his frigates were scattered he fell in with it. Thus, without any warning, the great chance had come. Sadly fallen from its old glories, the fleet consisted of but seven sail and a Portuguese prize. There were but two galleons, with two armed *urcas* or 'hulks' and three merchantmen. Stayner had only three of his frigates in a position to engage, the rest being to leeward; but they were all three second-rates of over fifty guns, and more than a match for their prey. Undeceived by the admiral's flag being flown on one of the *urcas*, Stayner let it go and made for the galleons. After a six hours' action, one of them which carried the Marquis of Baydes, Governor of Chile, was burnt. The other and one of the merchantmen were taken, and the remaining *urca* was sunk. The pseudo-flagship and the prize were chased ashore, while the two other merchantmen escaped into Gibraltar. It was one of the sharpest blows that had ever been dealt by England to the Indian trade. To the Spaniards it meant a loss in modern value of about ten millions sterling, to Cromwell a gain of three millions.<sup>1</sup> So beyond all expectation the main object of the

<sup>1</sup> In the above account I have mainly followed the Spanish version (Duro, *Armada Española*, v. 22), rectifying where possible by Stayner's own despatch (Thurloe, v. 399). The odds were certainly greatly in favour of the English, and Stayner in his very modest report did not seek to exaggerate his exploit.

campaign was after all accomplished, and Stayner's great stroke of fortune brought it to an end.

He had not long joined the main fleet in the Tagus with his prizes when the long-awaited orders arrived from the Protector. For more than a month after Lloyd had arrived with the admirals' reply to his suggestions, Cromwell had delayed his decision. He was in the throes of forcing Mazarin into a joint operation against Dunkirk, and it would seem that he meant to hold Blake and his fleet *in terrorem* until he knew what line the Cardinal meant to take. It was not till August 17 that Lockhart, his ambassador extraordinary at the French Court, was able to assure him that Mazarin had given in and had begun caressing him with an almost suspicious cordiality. Eleven days later Cromwell's instructions to his admirals were sent down to Plymouth.<sup>1</sup>

In despair of orders they had just decided to winter in the Tagus, to be ready for action at the earliest moment next year; but Cromwell's despatch proved a complete endorsement of the views which Montague had sent home by Captain Lloyd. He noted that they had found it impossible to move the Spaniard or to attack him in his harbours; 'and as for any design on Gibraltar,' he adds, 'we see by General Montague's letter to the Secretary that nothing therein was feasible without a good body of landmen,' and in view of his project against Dunkirk he had no troops to spare. With Dunkirk substituted for Gibraltar as the main objective, the whole fleet was clearly no longer required where it was. Montague was therefore to bring home the largest ships, while Blake with twenty frigates, or such other number as he deemed advisable, was to stay out and hold the station.

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, v. 317, 363.

With this decision of Cromwell's his Mediterranean policy sank to a mere accessory to his main line of energy. Having decided to concentrate his action on the ports of the Spanish Netherlands, and establish there a foothold on the continent, he abandoned the idea of Gibraltar. Thereafter the war took a different turn. Owing to the mutual jealousies of the Protestant powers the Baltic for the moment assumed a more important place than the Mediterranean, while Stayner's success and affairs in the West Indies fixed the maritime war more definitely still to Elizabethan lines. It was a war policy that was crowned by the famous exploit of Blake and Stayner upon the flota of New Spain at Teneriffe in the following year—an exploit which was also the crown of Blake's own reputation. On his way home in triumph he died, and in a few weeks Badiley followed him to an honoured grave. Neither lived to demonstrate the value of the work they had set on foot, or to complete what they had begun. Still its effects were far from lost, as the remaining events of the Protectorate administration proved.

The importance that was attached to continuing a Mediterranean fleet is marked by the fact that, a few months after Montague's return, it was decided to establish at Tetuan a purveyor for the navy, and this resolution was carried out early in the year 1657.<sup>1</sup> With Lisbon as a careening port and Tetuan as a victualling station the squadron was thus fairly well based, even without Gibraltar, and on this system it continued to be worked. When Blake went home, Captain John Stoakes, who had served as his captain throughout his Mediterranean cruise and had commanded the blockading division off Cadiz during his chief's absence at Teneriffe,

<sup>1</sup> Minute-book of the Navy Commissioners, *Add. MSS.* 1903, ff. 221, 220, January 10 and February 24, 1657.

was left in command of the station with a squadron of about twenty frigates. At the end of the year, when it became apparent that the fleet which had been laboriously preparing at Cadiz could never get to sea, he was ordered to send home all but ten sail, and with these to enter the Mediterranean and put a stop to the depredations of the Tunis and Tripoli corsairs. As a first step he sent forward Captain Whetstone, a nephew of the Protector, with four frigates to cruise between Malta and Crete with instructions to use the Venetian island of Zante as a base and rendezvous. He himself proceeded to Leghorn, presumably for stores and beverage. His reception was far from cordial. The Grand Duke's attitude was so unfriendly that Stoakes suspected him of having been seduced to the Spanish interest, and before he left relations had grown very strained. Still, in spite of all difficulties, he was able to appear before Tunis at the end of January 1658. He at once demanded the release of all British captives as a preliminary to further negotiation. The Bey, in a spirit very different from that which he had previously displayed, replied that he was ready to ransom them upon the same terms as Blake had accepted at Algiers. Stoakes was for fighting, but having ascertained that there were eight men-of-war in Porto Farina, and that the forts had been greatly strengthened, and knowing also his own frigates were too foul to do good work, he decided to offer a ransom. Ultimately he induced the Bey to give up all the prisoners for about a tenth of their market value. He then was admitted into Porto Farina to clean, and before he had done he successfully negotiated a treaty which rendered English commerce immune from interference, and gave the war vessels of each state freedom of the other's ports. Having thus satisfactorily settled

matters at Tunis, he had to return to the northward to recruit before doing anything against Tripoli. At Leghorn he was bluntly refused pratique and actually fired upon for taking a prize in alleged breach of the neutrality of the port. As he said, he had done nothing but what every Dutch admiral had done before him, and he himself had seen Blake do far more. But Leghorn was becoming thoroughly Spanish. Even the provisions which had been prepared for him he was not permitted to take on board, and, not wishing to involve the country in hostilities with Tuscany, he contented himself with sending a protest to Florence and reporting home, and betook himself to Marseilles.<sup>1</sup>

There he had now a certainty of the most cordial reception. For Mazarin his ally's fleet in the Mediterranean was too tempting a chance to be thrown away. Ever since the beginning of the year an expedition had been in preparation at Toulon for some unknown objective. The Chevalier Paul was in charge of it, and the English Consul at Marseilles reported to Lockhart in Paris that it was believed to be for a renewal of the attempt on Naples.<sup>2</sup> It is possible a diversion of this kind may have been contemplated. Mazarin at this time was being pressed from various quarters to renew his old attempt on the Two Sicilies, and particularly by the eccentric Queen of Sweden who was now in Rome, and in spite of her abdication could not keep her fingers from

<sup>1</sup> See Stoakes's despatches of January 9 and February 27, 1658, in *Domestic Calendar*, ii. 259, 307, and Thurloe, vii. 77; of March 29, *Carte MSS.* 73; of April, *Rawlinson MSS.* A. 58. For the whole of his command see the last part of Weale's *Journal*, *ubi supra*, which unfortunately comes to an abrupt end on March 9, 1658, at Porto Farina, where it says Stoakes had just finished careening his frigates; Whetstone's *Letter-book* from January 29 to August 23 in *Rawlinson MSS.* C. 381; and the papers used at Whetstone's court-martial, *Add. MSS.* 1904, f. 169 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Aldworth to Lockhart, February 9-19, 1658 (Thurloe, vi. 787)

politics. Her and her friends he gave to understand that such an enterprise was out of the question, but others were allowed to believe that he had it still in his mind and was only waiting his opportunity.<sup>1</sup> At the moment his hands were full with Flanders and with operations against the Spanish possessions in the north of Italy. There he was supporting the Duke of Modena, who was operating against Mantua from the southward. Early in March a thousand French troops had landed for his support at Viareggio, the chief port of the Duchy of Lucca. Leave for the purpose had been granted by the Duke; and Longland, in reporting the affair, appeared to believe his complacency was in some measure due to the presence of the English fleet. 'The Italian Princes,' he wrote, 'do all believe that the Protector's ships of war in these seas came chiefly to join with the French and carry on their designs against Spain.'<sup>2</sup> This was not true, but Mazarin was no man to miss the value of the impression or a chance of giving it emphasis. So soon, then, as he had finally fallen in with Cromwell's views as to the joint operations in Flanders, he ventured just at this time to request that some of the Mediterranean squadron might be permitted to act for a few weeks with the Chevalier Paul.<sup>3</sup> The object is nowhere mentioned, but there can be little doubt that the request related more or less directly to the operations of the Duke of Modena.

The idea which most strongly recommended itself to Mazarin at the moment was a fresh attempt to seize Orbitello and Porto Longone in Elba, and so block the line

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Mazarin*, vol. viii. To Père Dumeau, March 29, p. 689; to the Queen of Sweden, May 9, p. 709; to Card. Antonio Barberini, May 15, p. 714; to the Duke of Modena, June 19, p. 738; to the Duke of Castelnuovo, July 3, p. 747; to the Queen of Sweden, July 7, p. 749.

<sup>2</sup> Thurloe, vi. 824, 846, February 28, March 5, 1658.

<sup>3</sup> Lockhart to Thurloe, *ibid.* 854, March 7, 1658, and *ibid.* vii. 70, April 11.

by which reinforcements passed from Spain to Milan.<sup>1</sup> This was probably the real intention, if indeed he had any at all, and the whole affair was not an astute piece of stage play. In any case the precise objective matters little for our purpose. Mazarin's chief anxiety was to prevent the Spaniards sending troops to reinforce Dunkirk, which they were known to be about to attempt, and the obvious way to achieve his end, as he well knew, was to threaten an offensive in the Mediterranean. Cromwell, on Lockhart's advice, at once granted the request, and promised him the co-operation of five or six frigates for six weeks, which was all Mazarin asked. They were to be at or near Toulon by June 1, but it was not till May 31 that the orders were sent off to Stoakes.<sup>2</sup> The French King, he was told, was about to undertake a naval expedition against the common enemy, and he was to detail five or six frigates to accompany the Toulon force 'to such place against the Spaniard as the admiral of the French fleet shall desire,' and to defend it against attack. These orders he received about the end of the month, and placed half his fleet under Captain Whetstone for the purpose. With the rest he determined to proceed to Tripoli and complete the work he had left undone.<sup>3</sup>

Whetstone at once took his squadron to Toulon; but though it was a month behind the time Mazarin had originally specified, he found the French fleet in no condition to sail. A demonstration was made before Marseilles, which was again in a state of revolt, and that

<sup>1</sup> Mazarin to Card. Barberini, February 5-15, 1658 (*Lettres*, viii. 679). Stoakes to —, September 28, 1658 (*Carte MSS.* 73, f. 205 b).

<sup>2</sup> Thurloe, vii. 70, 155.

<sup>3</sup> Stoakes to Whetstone, June 29 (*Rawlinson MSS.* 381 and *Add. MSS.* 9304, f. 148). Same to Navy Commissioners (*Dom. Cal.* July 9). Same to Thurloe, June 21 (*Thurloe*, vii. 189).

was all; and when August came Whetstone began to clamour to be liberated from the irksome service.<sup>1</sup>

As it happened, orders for his release were already on their way. In the interval the battle of the Dunes had been fought, the Spanish power in the Netherlands was completely broken, and Mazarin was looking awry at the price he had had to pay for Cromwell's help. To see Dunkirk in English hands was small incentive to similar joint operations elsewhere, even if he had ever seriously intended them; and when all was over his note to Lockhart began to change. He grumbled over everything connected with the situation in Flanders, and informed the ambassador that he had practically given up his project in the Mediterranean and that it was not worth while to detain Whetstone's frigates any longer. He would prefer a joint expedition to intercept the Spanish treasure fleet later on. As a matter of fact the threat had served its purpose and Mazarin found he had been hunting with the lion.<sup>2</sup>

How powerful must have been the moral effect of Whetstone's junction with the Toulon expedition became manifest when we see how Stoakes fared at Tripoli. The bare appearance of his little force before the port was enough to secure him the same success he had achieved at Tunis, and a treaty similar to those existing with the other Barbary states was exacted.<sup>3</sup> This was about the last news which Cromwell lived to receive from the Mediterranean, and so he saw his policy triumphant.

Still there was no idea of letting go the hold. A week

<sup>1</sup> Whetstone to the Admiralty Commissioners, August 3, 1658 (*Dom. Cal.* p. 108). A letter-book containing the whole of his correspondence at this time is in *Rawlinson MSS.* C. 381.

<sup>2</sup> Thurloe, vi. 369. Lockhart to Thurloe, July 8 (*ibid.* vii. 251, 306). Thurloe to Whetstone, July 27 (*Dom. Cal.* p. 101).

<sup>3</sup> Admiralty Commissioners to Stoakes, September 16 (*Dom. Cal.* p. 140).

earlier he had ordered the recall of half Stoakes's squadron, but not with any intention of abandoning the position he had taken up. It was rather with the view of increasing the efficiency of the Mediterranean fleet by substituting fresh ships for those that were spent. It was a policy which Montague continued to press, and under Richard Cromwell steps were taken to keep up Stoakes's strength.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the winter, acting from Toulon and Tetuan, he was able very effectually to police the trade routes and capture every Spanish war ship that ventured to show herself. Communications between Italy and Spain were rendered almost impossible. In the early part of 1659 he even made an attempt to take his slender force round to Cadiz with the bold intention of attacking the outward-bound West Indian fleet, but persistent westerly weather prevented his getting out of the Straits till his stores were exhausted. He was further much hampered by the insubordination and discontent of his captains. The political troubles which were beginning to shake Cromwell's fabric to pieces spread to the fleet. Whetstone had to be arrested and sent home, and another captain deserted with his ship.<sup>2</sup> But Stoakes by a firm hand managed to keep his force effective. Still the end was near. On his return to Toulon in 1659 to refit, instead of meeting with the usual welcome, he found himself received with marked coldness and even indignity. The explanation was not long in declaring itself. The French no longer required him. They had gained all they wanted, for the Spaniards were clearly ready to accept their terms of peace. On May 8 an armistice was signed between the two powers; on June 4 a preliminary

<sup>1</sup> Thurloe, vii. 306. *Dom. Cal.* p. 192, November 20-1, 1658.

<sup>2</sup> *Rawlinson MSS.* C. 381, and Stoakes's despatch, September 23, 1658 (*Carte MSS.* 73).

treaty was agreed to, and a fortnight later Stoakes was recalled.<sup>1</sup>

From the first both Spain and France had each looked to the English alliance as a means to dictate peace to its adversary. The fact that Spain was so soon forced to accept the hard terms which France offered is usually attributed entirely to her disasters in Flanders. But, as we have seen, there was another and perhaps a more powerful consideration nearer home. The Spanish Court had always shown itself as indifferent to pressure in the Low Countries as it was nervous about the command of the Mediterranean. The mere fact that five English frigates joined the French admiral for a few weeks was little in itself, but as a threat of what might come it was in the last degree alarming. In the old war no amount of harrying of her oceanic commerce had served to bring Spain to her knees, but the same kind of danger in the Mediterranean was another thing. Longland probably only voiced the general opinion when he had recommended operations against Naples. 'I am confident,' said he, 'that the loss of this kingdom would be a greater blow to the Spaniard than the loss of the West Indies, for that affords him only money, but this both money and men.'<sup>2</sup> With the success of the French and English arms in Flanders, both Cromwell and Mazarin were free to resume their Mediterranean policy with vigour; and, should they choose to follow up the line which Whetstone's movement had indicated, there could be small hope of Spain retaining her Italian provinces. Her command of the connecting seas was wholly lost; her great empire lay exposed in disjointed fragments, incapable of mutual support; and had she not recognised the hopelessness of the situation by the treaty of the Pyrenees, her

<sup>1</sup> *Dom. Cal.* June 17, 1658, p. 377.

<sup>2</sup> Thurloe, v. 93.

ruin could hardly have been averted. It is impossible then to believe that, in taking the humiliating step she did, and making peace on Mazarin's terms, she was not largely influenced by what had been happening within the Straits, and that Stoakes's forgotten presence at Toulon, which then caused so much stir in the neighbouring Courts, did not do much to emphasise the meaning and reach of a British Mediterranean fleet.

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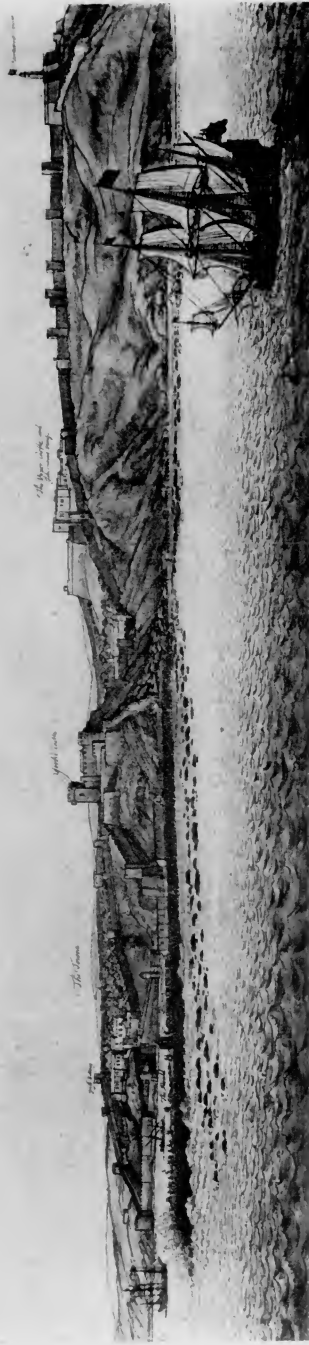
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IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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BRITISH POWER WITHIN THE STRAITS

1603-1713

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## ENGLAND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

### CHAPTER XIX

#### DUNKIRK AND TANGIER

It has come to be the received opinion that Cromwell's influence on English history was almost wholly negative. He broke down much that cumbered the ground, but of the structure he strove to raise on the ruins practically nothing, it is said, survived him. In all that concerns society, government, and religion, there is so much to support the judgment that it will probably stand, yet it is far from giving the whole truth. If it were applied to foreign affairs, so far from being just, it would involve a serious omission. In all that concerned the British attitude to the outside world he changed much and left much behind him. He found his country impotent and neglected in the councils of Europe, and taught her how to speak with a commanding voice. He gave her, in the first place, the instrument—a perfected navy in the true modern sense—a navy of war ships wholly independent of merchant auxiliaries—a thing which had never yet been seen in modern times. It was a stride as great as that which Drake and his fellows made when they perfected a sailing navy, and the results for England were no less invigorating. But Cromwell gave still more. He gave the sentiment for using the instrument. For he bequeathed to the restored monarchy

a definite naval policy in the Mediterranean and an indestructible ambition for what we now call imperial politics.

The two things were intimately connected. It has been said that Cromwell's war with Spain was an Elizabethan war, conceived on Elizabethan lines; but this is not wholly true. There was a difference, and one of great importance. Cromwell's main strategical idea, like that of the Elizabethans, was to operate against the American colonies and Oceanic trade of Spain; but, unlike theirs, it contemplated as a condition precedent the covering of those operations by the seizure of the Straits of Gibraltar and the domination of the Mediterranean. The design was also to be enforced by a close alliance with Portugal that came near to being a protectorate, and had a shrewd eye to the gradual insinuation of England into her place in the Far East. But this too was an Elizabethan idea. The main distinction of Cromwell's conception was that Mediterranean power lay at the root of it. It is true, as we have seen, that although he never let go this conception altogether, it fell to a subordinate place; but this was when his religious zeal boiled to the surface and disturbed the level flow of his more practical and sagacious line of thought. When he saw a chance of leading a great Protestant war on Rome, his imperial policy lost its clearness, and the result was the occupation of Dunkirk instead of Gibraltar. Still it was but an aberration—a temporary reaction to an obsolete policy, which even Elizabeth had regarded with suspicion, and which had no real vitality. The visionary aim of the zealot died with him, and the master current he had found resumed its flow. In this way at least, if in no other, his imprint remained and still remains sharp and undefaced upon British polity.

When Stoakes and his fleet were recalled in the summer of 1659, it might have seemed that the situation

which had been created in the Mediterranean was going to perish with the rest of the Protector's work. But it was not so; and of such vigour was the seed he had sown, that, though almost everything else was being changed or uprooted, this plant sprang up again with new exuberance. For awhile indeed there was no sign it was not dead. The republic was in its agony. Revolution succeeded revolution, and government government in rapid succession, and in the eyes of continental diplomacy England was once more a quantity to be neglected. Upon Pheasant Island in the Bidasoa the French and Spaniard laboriously concluded the treaty of the Pyrenees, with no regard to her or her interests. In the interminable list of articles, which were finally agreed upon, everything was provided against for a century to come, as though the future of Europe lay entirely with France and Spain, and England's power to interfere had passed away. Yet the ink, as it were, was hardly dry when England was seen again standing with Cromwell's weapon in her hand, and both the great powers were once more feverishly bidding for her goodwill.

In the famous treaty of the Pyrenees, Spain had found herself compelled to give way at every point where Mazarin pressed her. It was a complete triumph for France. With Portugal in revolt, and declaring itself once more an independent kingdom, it was impossible for Spain to resist the pressure that was put upon her. It was for the sake of reconquering Portugal that she submitted to the humiliating conditions and the losses of territory that were forced upon her. The height of her greatness had dated from the time when, in 1580, Philip II. seized the vacant throne of Lisbon, and found himself, for the first time, a great power upon the

ocean. With the loss of the Tagus and the Portuguese marine by the revolt of the Braganzas in 1640, the real troubles of Spain had begun, and it was clear to the Court that without Portugal her position could never be recovered. On the question of Portugal therefore she had been adamant, and Mazarin, who had been vigorously supporting the revolt throughout, found himself compelled to abandon his *protégé*. Portugal seemed doomed. In despair an ambassador flew to England to try to renew with the new revolutionary Government Cromwell's old alliance. He found everything in confusion, and it was not till Monk had dominated all the warring factions, and was sitting like an uncrowned king in Whitehall, that he found a ray of hope. It was a time when, to all who could read the signs, the monarchy seemed unexpectedly on the brink of a restoration. It is true Monk had absolutely refused to have anything to do with the Stuart exiles. His single purpose was to preserve order with a rod of iron, so that none of the revolutionary elements could gain the upper hand, and to hold the balance true till a free Parliament could be elected to voice the will of the country. Every day it became clearer that that voice would be a summons to the King to return, and every day the desperation of the more intractable elements became more difficult to control. Monk and his advisers began to doubt whether it would be possible for them to preserve their neutral attitude till Parliament could meet, and it was at this moment that the Portuguese Ambassador saw his chance.

It had been an old idea of the Braganzas, dating back to the earliest days of their rebellion, to seek support for their cause in wedding a daughter of the House with the Prince of Wales. So long as the English monarchy kept its head above water, the project

had never been lost sight of, and now that the Stuart star was once more rising to the ascendant it was immediately revived.<sup>1</sup> In the Portuguese Court there can have been little doubt as to the bait that should be offered. The two treaties of commerce, which England had already concluded with the new kingdom, sufficiently revealed the English desire for a share of the East Indian trade; and when, after Cromwell's abandonment of the Gibraltar project, his covering fleet had been compelled to base itself on Lisbon, every one must have known what longing eyes England was casting on a naval station in the Straits. Bombay in the Far East, and Tangier, the last of the Portuguese possessions in North Africa, must have naturally suggested themselves. The price was a large one to pay even for the English alliance; but without that alliance there was every probability that both places would be lost—Bombay to the Dutch, and Tangier to the Spaniards or the Moors. It was clearly the wisest policy to spend them while they were still in hand, and to spend them in the market where they would be most highly valued.

These then were the terms, together with the unprecedented marriage portion of 300,000*l.*, that the Ambassador had to offer Monk as the price of Charles's hand if he were restored to the British throne. He was able to point out to the General—so the story goes—that 'besides the greatest portion in money that ever queen had, the Infanta was to bring with her Tangier, which would make the English masters of the trade in the Mediterranean, and Bombay, which would give them the like advantage in the East Indies; and over and above all would serve to humble the proud Spaniard, which the General, according to the notions he imbibed in

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*, sub voce 'Catherine of Braganza.'

his younger days, thought to be the greatest advantage of all.<sup>1</sup> The story rings true. In his boyhood Monk had been brought up in the midst of the hot anti-Spanish feeling that surrounded Raleigh down in Devonshire. He had himself a score to wipe off, for his first taste of military service was at the miserable failure before Cadiz in 1625. There, it is worthy of note, he had served as a volunteer under his kinsman, Sir Richard Grenville, who was the moving spirit in the attack that was made on Lord Wimbledon for not attempting Gibraltar. The Ambassador's proposal must at least have awakened some vivid old memories. The whole scheme moreover exactly hit the soldierlike if crude ideas of statecraft which the great soldier of fortune had expressed in his 'Observations on Military and Political Affairs,' the work he had written during his imprisonment in the Tower. Indeed there is reason to believe that it was the brilliant prospect which this proposal opened up that finally stirred him from his neutrality. Immediately after the interview he sent his cavalier cousin, that arch-intriguer John Grenville, with whom he had long refused to speak a word on politics, to open communications with the King in Flanders.<sup>2</sup> On the General's advice Charles immediately made his escape from Spanish territory and sought refuge in Holland. At the Hague the Portuguese envoy met him, and subsequently followed him to London. What ensued is hidden, but Monk, it is said, took the first opportunity of recommending the proposal to Charles, and with so much weight that in the autumn the exultant envoy was able to return to Lisbon with

<sup>1</sup> Kennet's *Register*, pp. 91, 393, on the authority of Sir Robert Southwell, a few years later Ambassador to Portugal.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Grenville, afterwards Earl of Bath, was the son of Monk's aunt, Grace, by her marriage with Sir Bevil Grenville, the elder brother of his father-in-arms, Sir Richard.

assurances that set the whole of Portugal wild with delight.

At the last moment, to all appearance, the struggling kingdom was saved from a second destruction, but in fact it was still far from safe. When the Ambassador returned in February 1661 with full power to negotiate the marriage, he found hostility had made its mark. The far-reaching importance of the project in hand is testified by the vigour and variety of the opposition it aroused. It is clear that at first it received but little support except from Cromwell's men, Monk and Montague, now respectively Duke of Albemarle and Earl of Sandwich. Clarendon even is said not to have been converted at once to the Protector's policy, while to the end it was hotly opposed by the Queen-mother and the Earl of Bristol, the son of the first Earl, who as John Digby had tried so hard to get James I. to use the Mediterranean lever.

The opposition was natural enough. The Dutch, who were already well advanced in absorbing the Eastern possessions of Portugal, viewed the prospect of the English at Bombay as an intolerable check to their progress, while Spain, who had never recognised the new kingdom and still regarded Tangier as Spanish territory, openly announced that an English occupation of the place would be regarded as a *casus belli*. At the back of all was the resistance of the Roman Church. In spite of the pressure France had put upon the Pope he had stubbornly held by Spain, and refused to recognise the Braganza Government; the Inquisition was doing its best to crush the national movement; and in view of the frightening which the Vatican had recently received from Cromwell's cruising squadron, a Protestant porter at the gates of the Mediterranean could only be an abiding menace to Rome. So great was the danger which these influences seemed to

threaten, that it is doubtful whether Cromwell's men—powerful and dreaded as they still were—would have been able to hold Charles to their views, had not France come to the rescue. It was only with the greatest reluctance that she had abandoned her Portuguese friends at the treaty of the Pyrenees, and probably she had always meant to use the first opportunity of coming to their assistance underhanded. In Charles's dilemma Louis XIV. saw his opportunity. Mazarin was just dead, and almost the first move which the young King made on his own initiative in foreign politics was to assure Clarendon in the profoundest secrecy that if Charles took the contemplated step it would have the support of France. With this assurance the ground of the opposition, inspired as it was by the Queen-mother, was cut from under it. Till the last hour the momentous resolution was kept a close secret; but when finally the full Council was summoned to pronounce upon the Portuguese marriage, not a single vote was cast against it.

So, as it were, from its ashes the English Mediterranean policy sprang again into being, and once more it was the breath of France that gave it life. What more dramatic irony can history show? It was at this very moment that Colbert was preparing to found the only true navy that France had ever possessed. The day of its most glorious achievements was breaking, and the evil star that hung persistently over her heroic efforts to achieve the dominion of the sea glittered malignantly in the dawn. Once more we see England hanging back irresolutely from her destiny, and once more it is France who thrusts her on. We are on the threshold of a new era—European politics are pausing for a fresh departure—and this is the first step that France takes.

In the changing aspect of continental affairs it must

have seemed natural enough. The era of the Thirty Years' War was at an end, and the age of Louis XIV. had begun. On the morrow of Charles's landing at Dover the young French King, by virtue of the treaty of the Pyrenees, had married the Infanta Maria Theresa, and the seeds of the great wars of succession were sown. Thenceforth France was to fill the place that Spain had filled, but as yet her advance must be halting. Her navy was still to create. For the moment Louis's ambitions were set upon the Spanish Netherlands, and it was for the time inevitable that he should follow Mazarin's policy of using the English fleet. If England were strong in the Mediterranean, it was as yet a safeguard to France and her trade, and not a curb, and as things stood Louis's resolve was as statesmanlike as it was bold.

Whether the English Government fully grasped the meaning of the step is doubtful. Men like Monk and Sandwich, who had had to do with the navy in Cromwell's time and been in touch with Blake, may have felt, even if they could not formulate, the strategical importance of Tangier; but in the public declarations of ministers it is not clearly defined. When, on May 8, 1661, the King announced the marriage to an enthusiastic Parliament, Clarendon explained to them its meaning and intention; but he justified the match mainly on commercial grounds and as a defiance to Spain. He did not even mention Tangier or Bombay.<sup>1</sup> It is quite possible, however, that the intended occupation was to be kept a secret until it was an accomplished fact. In any case, what Clarendon revealed was enough, and both in Parliament and throughout the country the news was received with acclamation.

So the new Stuart monarchy boldly stepped out upon

<sup>1</sup> See the report of his speech in *Parliamentary History*, iv. 190; and Kennet's *Register*, 438.

the road which the Republic had begun to tread, and it did so deliberately at the risk of almost certain war with Spain, a risk from which the King in his still unstable seat might well have flinched. Among the many causes which had led to the remarkable Royalist reaction was certainly the belief that a restoration would mean peace with Spain—the most valued field of English commerce. To reopen the war was to alienate the all-powerful merchant influence, which was looking forward to a period of quiet and prosperous business on the time-honoured lines. Though the promised support of France was enough to convince the King, it was not generally known, and the opposition in Parliament might have been serious had not the Spanish Ambassador himself come to the rescue by an excess of zeal. A pamphlet had been issued pointing out that the commercial advantages which would flow from the Portuguese alliance would outweigh the loss of Spanish friendship. The Spanish Ambassador answered it by printing a counter-declaration which he had presented to the Council. His arguments were weighty enough, but he unwisely presented them in such a manner that he seemed to arrogate to his master the right to dictate to the King of England the choice of a wife.<sup>1</sup> The blunder was easily turned against him with the result that the innocent little Princess of Braganza became for the moment the heroine of British national sentiment, and Tangier the stronghold of the most violent feeling that can rouse Englishmen to adventurous action. So, when the Spanish Ambassador went so far, as was reported, as plainly to threaten war if the King persisted, Charles could safely reply, short and sharp, that 'the King of Spain might do what he pleased—he valued it not.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Sir Richard Fanshawe*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> News-letter, March 12, *Trentham MSS.*, *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 159.

The action taken was prompt and determined. A powerful squadron for the Straits was already well forward under the old colour of a demonstration against Algiers. Since the withdrawal of Stoakes's squadron the corsairs had become troublesome again, and moreover a Dutch squadron with the same ostensible object was also about to sail for the southward and would require watching.<sup>1</sup>

'This month ends,' wrote Pepys on the last day of February 1661, 'with two great secrets under dispute, but yet known to very few: first, who the King will marry; and what the meaning of the fleet is that we are now sheathing to set out to the southward. Most think against Algiers, against the Turk, or to the East Indies against the Dutch.' A little later the excitement was increased by a second and still larger fleet being ordered. On June 10 Lord Sandwich, who was now joint Commander-in-Chief with Monk, informed Pepys that he had been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to bring home the Queen. First, however, he was to proceed to Algiers to settle the business with the Dey, and then, having seen his squadron revictualled and refreshed, to return to Lisbon with three ships, and there meet the fleet that was to follow him. Not a word was yet disclosed of seeing that England was not forestalled at Tangier, but already measures had been taken. It was known that Henry Mordaunt, now Earl of Peterborough, was to be rewarded for his heroic but hare-brained plotting against the Protectorate by the governorship of Tangier, and was to be given fifteen companies of foot from the garrison of Dunkirk.<sup>2</sup>

This appointment is the first intimation of another

<sup>1</sup> *Trentham MSS.*, *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 166, 170, and see Sec. Nicholas to Curtius, May 10, 1661, *Dom. Cal.* 586.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 203.

and most serious step that was necessary to round off the policy which Charles had adopted. Of all wise actions few perhaps have been more mercilessly misrepresented than the sale of Dunkirk. Justice in recent times has been done to the good motives of the Government, but the intimate connection of the surrender with the occupation of Tangier and the return to a strong Mediterranean policy has passed unnoticed. Yet it is certain that in the final stages of the marriage negotiations the two ideas were so intimately related as to form one strategical whole, and there is reason to believe that from the first they were regarded as inseparable.<sup>1</sup> Owing to the passions which the sale afterwards aroused the published accounts of the affair wear different colours, but all of them agree that Monk was from the first and throughout the firm advocate of the surrender, and that Sandwich was no less sure. Indeed Sandwich used to say that he was actually the first to propose it, on the ground that Dunkirk was wholly unsuited for a naval port.<sup>2</sup> All the known facts of the case go to confirm Clarendon's own account of the transaction. According to him it was arranged by Lord Southampton, the Lord Treasurer, who was at his wit's end to make both ends meet, in consultation with Monk and 'the best seamen,' and its expediency was practically decided on before the question was ever brought before him. There seems indeed no doubt whatever that the whole of expert opinion regarded the project as highly desirable on strategical grounds. Clarendon however was shocked, and, when first approached by his colleagues, begged the matter might go no further till the

<sup>1</sup> Kennet's *Register*, pp. 91, 770; Echard, *History*, Car. II. p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Southwell to Clarendon (*Leybourne-Popham MSS.* p. 250). Pepys also says Sandwich declared, 'if it should in Parliament be inquired into the selling of Dunkirk, he will be found to be the greatest adviser of it.'

King's opinion was taken. Whereupon Southampton persuaded Monk to come with him to Whitehall and broach the subject to the King and the Duke of York. After several discussions it was so far approved that Charles decided it should be brought before the secret committee of the Council. Besides the King and his brother and the Chancellor, it consisted of Southampton, Monk, Sandwich, Sir George Carteret, who had already won considerable reputation abroad as an admiral and was now Treasurer of the Navy, and the two secretaries—one being Monk's kinsman and right-hand man, Sir William Morice, who had originally arranged the first meeting with the Portuguese Ambassador. As Clarendon was ill they met at his house. The result of the conference was a unanimous opinion that on financial and strategical grounds Dunkirk ought to be given up.

The political reasons were no less strong. The Cromwellian policy to which they were recurring in the Portuguese marriage involved a close alliance with France, and with the almost certain prospect of war with Spain this was more than ever necessary. But so keen was Louis to secure Dunkirk that its retention would probably mean war with France as well as Spain, while its cession would almost certainly buy a French alliance of the closest description. Moreover, Charles was by no means satisfied with the mere secret assurance of support for his Portuguese policy that he had received from Louis, and this was only wise of him. For by a secret article in the treaty of the Pyrenees France had an engagement with Spain in precisely the opposite sense. Obviously, then, seeing the far-reaching nature of the policy on which England was about to embark, there was everything to gain and very little to lose by giving up Dunkirk to France. It was getting rid of an incumbrance

which had no place in the new world-wide scheme of empire, and acquiring something that for the time at least was an essential part of it. The decision of the secret committee therefore was to lay the matter before the Privy Council, where it was approved with but one dissentient voice.

Such then is the story as Clarendon tells it, and there seems no valid reason for doubting its general truth.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand there are many, as will be seen, for believing it. Though Clarendon himself gives no dates at which the prolonged deliberations about Dunkirk, so circumstantially related, took place, it is certain they must have practically accompanied the marriage negotiations. The match was finally announced to Parliament on May 8. Sandwich, who was present at all the meetings about Dunkirk, left London to join the fleet on June 10, and did not return to town till the end of the following year. The meetings must therefore have begun at latest immediately after the question of the King's marriage was settled. There is further the fact that the marriage treaty actually contained a clause by which Charles bound himself not to surrender Dunkirk to Spain. It is difficult to believe that such a proviso could have been admitted had not the King

<sup>1</sup> The only serious contradiction comes from Clarendon's own lips. When the Comte d'Estrades came over from France as Ambassador Extraordinary to arrange the marriage of Charles's sister with the Duc d'Orléans, he had secret instructions to negotiate the sale. At the outset he was staggered by the high price Clarendon asked. Clarendon told him that as yet he had only gained over the King and the Duke of York. He had yet to convince Monk, Sandwich, and the Treasurer, and it was only by Louis's promising a high price he could hope to do so. Clarendon clearly gave Estrades to understand that the sale was his own idea, and that the other three men were not yet in the secret. A week later he told the Ambassador, to Louis's regret, that they had been informed of what was going on. Clearly, however, Clarendon, in holding his three powerful colleagues in the background, was only using an ordinary device to drive a hard bargain. (*Lettres et Mémoires d'Estrades*, August 17, 21, 27, 1662. Combe's *Sale of Dunkirk*, pp. 7, 11, 13, &c.)

already decided, in principle at least, to give up Cromwell's conquest and to give it up to France. It is certain at any rate that Charles lost no time in broaching the subject. In July the Comte d'Estrades came over to settle the marriage of the King's sister with the Duc d'Orléans. Before even he had made his public entry Charles sent for him for a confidential interview. After speaking of the special subject of his mission Charles casually mentioned Dunkirk and began to talk big about its being a *place d'armes* from which he could step to further conquest. The Ambassador, however, would not rise to the cast. He put the matter off by saying his master attached little importance to the place strategically, and then proceeded to encourage the King in the dreams of distant empire to which the possession of Jamaica and the Portuguese alliance seemed to open the way.<sup>1</sup>

There can then be practically no doubt that here in Charles's feint and the Ambassador's *riposte* we have the real meaning of the sale of Dunkirk. It was a vital factor in the return to the same policy which the Protector had adopted when he found his dream of a Protestant crusade impracticable, and which he abandoned when his crusading hopes revived. As the zealot in him had sacrificed Gibraltar for Dunkirk, so now Monk's level head forced the surrender of Dunkirk for Tangier, and swung the country definitely into the course that was to lead it to empire. There was but one serious man who is known to have doubted the wisdom of the exchange, and that was Schomberg. The famous soldier was passing through London on his way to take command of the Portuguese army, and he seized the moment to press Charles to keep Dunkirk. But he did not deal with

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres et Mémoires d'Estrades*. Estrades to Louis, July 11-21, 1661.

the seamen's objections or the financiers'. His reasons were purely military and his aim religious. The place, he contended, was a point of entry always tenable by a power that had command of the sea. The value he attached to such a point of entry is perfectly clear. He was a Calvinist, and his advice to hold Dunkirk was accompanied by an earnest appeal to the King to put himself at the head of a Protestant league. Thus his advocacy only confirms the wisdom of the other great soldier whose opinion was against him. It was but fresh testimony that Dunkirk was valueless except in view of the visionary policy of a Protestant crusade. The Elector of Brandenburg, when the sale was known, rightly read it as an abandonment of that policy. He too bewailed it, but only on political grounds. It would, he said, have served as a bridle both to France and Spain. In answer to his reproaches he was assured that it was to make the curb more severe that the step had been taken. England's immediate object was to strengthen her naval position, and from that point of view Dunkirk was a hindrance and not a help. It required a costly garrison, and as a naval station it was useless. Its surrender was an economy of strength and money, and the price was to be spent mainly upon the navy or laid up as a war fund.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ranke, iii. 391, cf. Burnet, 173. Burnet's account goes far to confirm Clarendon, though he differs in details. 'The military men,' he says, 'who were believed to be corrupted by France, said the place was not tenable &c. The Earl of Clarendon said he understood not these matters, but appealed to Monk's judgment, who did positively advise the letting it go for the sum that France offered. To make the business go the easier the King promised he would lay up all the money in the Tower and that it should not be touched but upon extraordinary occasions.' This reads almost like an echo of Monk's idea expressed in cap. xxix. of his *Observations*, 'showing how necessary it is for England . . . providently to prepare a rich public treasure beforehand, either for the defence of themselves or offending their enemies.' For a curious story that Monk 'agreed to and pressed the selling of Dunkirk because Sir Edward Harley, the Governor, was timid,' see

This was certainly the idea and intention of Monk and the seamen. Probably Charles meant it too. His head at this time was full of imperial aspirations, to which his marriage seemed to open the way. 'I remember,' says Bishop Burnet, writing of Tangier, 'when I knew the Court first, it was talked of at a mighty rate as the foundation of a new empire, and he would have been a very hardy man that would have ventured to have spoke lightly of it.'<sup>1</sup> The King's instructions to the men he sent out to take possession of his new acquisition fully bear out Burnet's remark, and show that Charles did not think of stopping short at Tangier or Bombay. They disclose, as the Bishop says, dreams of a gradually expanding empire in North Africa and another in the Far East, together with the domination of the Mediterranean, and the hope of absorbing the whole trade of Brazil. 'You know,' wrote Charles to Sir Richard Fanshaw on the eve of his departure as Ambassador to Portugal, 'You know one of the principal advantages we propose to ourself by this entire conjunction with Portugal is the advancement of the trade of this nation and the enlargement of our own territories and dominions.' Fanshaw himself was wholly with his preceptor and his imagination ranged higher still. He saw in a rosy future the male line of the House of Braganza fail, and England, even if Portugal itself slipped from her, succeeding by right and might to the vast trade and empire that centred at Lisbon.<sup>2</sup>

Robert Harley to Sir Edward Harley, *Welbeck MSS.* iii. 616, March 14, 1700.

<sup>1</sup> Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p. 30. Burnet first came to London in 1662; he was not actually about the Court till ten years later. *Ibid.* p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> Charles II. to Fanshaw, August 23, 1661, *Heathcote MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) p. 18. Fanshaw's instructions, *ibid.* p. 20. Fanshaw to Clarendon, *ibid.* p. 37. Peterborough's commission for Tangier, September 6, 1661, Davis, *History of the Second Queen's Royal Regiment*, p. 15.

Well might the Brandenburg Ambassador assure his master that the real reason of the step which the English were taking was to be found in the traditional belief—mistake he calls it—that Great Britain was a separate world. In truth England was embarked upon a world-wide policy, and in truth it was an idea that had been growing ever since the days when the Elizabethans taught her to know herself. But the German did not see how the idea had been modified by the work of Cromwell and Blake. He did not see how they had found in the Mediterranean a firmer grip on the vitals of Europe than any North Sea port could give.

It is then with this great departure, and not with the humiliation that immediately followed it, that we should associate the sale of Dunkirk. It should be remembered for what it meant at the time—and what it came at last to be—the final departure of England upon her true career. We should honour the King for his great intention and the men who brought him to it: Southampton, who justly measured the resources at his disposal; Sandwich, the admiral, who had learned the value of the Mediterranean; and above all Monk, the strategist and statesman, without whom in those early days the King would not move a finger, and at whose nod he felt that at any moment he might have to start on his travels again. It was these three men who, with Clarendon the Chancellor, were appointed the secret commissioners to carry out the sale—a fact which leaves no room for doubt that they were the real moving spirits in the affair.<sup>1</sup>

If we look closely at the men themselves, there remains as little doubt of the purity and loftiness of their intention.

<sup>1</sup> Kennet's *Register*. They were appointed on September 1, 1662, while the negotiations were still a profound secret. The matter was not settled till three months later. *Ranke*, iii. 390.

In their several persons they typified all the leading forces and ideas of which Charles's imperial policy was the latest expression. Southampton was the son of the man who was Shakespeare's patron and Essex's second self, and the sharer of all his ventures against Spain. One of the most ardent vessels of the Elizabethan spirit, he had become under James the promoter of every colonial enterprise and the embodiment of the national feeling which regarded Spain implacably as the hereditary enemy, and her colonial empire as the promised land. The alarm caused in Madrid when, in 1617, his name was connected with the first proposed expedition of an English fleet into the Mediterranean will be remembered.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wriothesley, the fourth Earl, though bred under these hot passions till the age of fourteen, was of a more stable temperament. A pattern of sober thought and lofty integrity, a convinced constitutionalist yet loyal subject, he had won the confidence of all parties. His appointment as Lord Treasurer at the Restoration was as quieting as that of Monk as Captain-General, and from the first the purity of his administration shone like the survival of a golden age. Of Sandwich it is enough to say he was the pupil of Blake and may be taken as representing the great admiral's ideas of the higher naval strategy, and those of the leading men of his school. But it is Monk whose life most curiously covers the period of development and accentuates its most prominent points. Born and bred in the very womb of Elizabethan romance, he had fed on the new spirit with his mother's milk. He was related to all the greatest names of that age from Grenville to Howard. Their exploits were his nursery tales. His uncles had fought and died under Drake and Vere, and at the house of his Aunt Stukeley, hard by

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, vol. i. p. 52.

the place where he was educated, he must have had the son of Pocahontas for a playfellow and worshipped Raleigh in the flesh as his boyish hero. A childhood so coloured was never quite outgrown. When scarcely out of boyhood he had served throughout Buckingham's ill-starred attempts to revive the glories of the past age. Then, like his fathers, he had gone to serve the Dutch against their oppressors, and after ten years' distinguished service he returned to England with the reputation of the pattern Low Country soldier. It was the eve of the troubles, but as yet all was quiet. The old spirit was still strong within him and Monk could not rest. Pining for adventure, he joined the wild scheme by which a thousand gentlemen, under the leadership of Prince Rupert and with a million of capital, were to sail away to conquer Madagascar, and from there to carve out, like Alexander, a mighty empire in the East. The civil wars put an end to all such dreams. But when they were over and Monk had risen to be Cromwell's right hand, it was intended that he should lead the career of conquest in the West Indies; and could he have been spared from Scotland he might well, as the greatest military administrator and one of the finest strategists of his time, have written a very different page on the Commonwealth history. As it was, he remained to build up a fresh reputation as an admiral against the Dutch, to command single-handed the most powerful fleet that had ever sailed the sea, and to lead it to victory against the greatest of the Dutch seamen. In his new sphere he lived to complete Blake's work and perfect the soldier's influence on the naval art. By him it was raised to the position of a true science, and posterity has recognised him as the real father of modern naval tactics.

When, therefore, we see such men as these proposing

and carrying through the Portuguese alliance and the surrender of Dunkirk, as it were in one movement, it is clear that, as was always asserted at the time, the two transactions were parts of one great design. It is clear too that that design was the expression of all that was most vigorous and sagacious in the expanding sentiment of the nation, the product of the forces and feeling that had been forming it for a century past, and the finger-post of the characteristic British policy whose most notable and enduring features are expansion beyond the Oceans and domination of the Mediterranean Sea. It was Cromwell who sounded the note and Cromwell who gave the means for carrying it to action—Cromwell who, as his best historian has said, was the greatest because the most typical of Englishmen of all time. So it was the greatest and most typical of Englishmen who carried the idea into being—men who represented the central stream of British opinion—for, of the four, two were the most sober of the Stuart councillors, and two the most moderate of Cromwell's men-at-arms.

The failure of the policy to secure the immediate and wide results that were very pardonably expected from it soon came to obscure its true intention, and, instead of being regarded as a loyal effort to take up the bow of Cromwell, it has survived as the emblem of the Stuart fatuity. But we have only to follow the history of the Tangier episode to see how unjustly posterity has judged it. We have only to see how profound was the impression in Europe, how nearly success was achieved, and how stoutly Charles clung to his original idea while one after the other all his fondest illusions were shattered, to appraise the matter at its true value.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE FIRST OCCUPATION OF THE STRAITS

For the student of history there is no more dangerous pitfall than the temptation to attach too much reality to the periods which historians shape for the elucidation of their work. It is so easy to fall into the error of thinking that, because those periods are clearly defined to us, they were also apprehended by the men of the time. Yet there have been pauses in the great march of events which were always unmistakable, and such a one is that which is marked by the treaty of the Pyrenees. Followed as it was by Louis's assumption of power, by Charles's restoration, and the Portuguese marriage, it was obviously a fresh point of departure. Europe was plainly marshalled in a new order, and every one was watching for the first indication of its outcome.

Since the signature of the treaty in 1659 until the middle of the year 1661 the statesmen of Western Europe had been occupied exclusively with the setting of the board. It was the sailing of Sandwich's fleet that was the first move, and as on June 19 he weighed for the Mediterranean every eye was upon him. It is true his ostensible mission was nothing more serious than to bring Algiers to reason, and doubtless the alleged object was more than a mere pretence. The security which Cromwell had given to the Levant trade had done much to reconcile the powerful merchant interest to his government, and Charles could not afford to do less. But no

one believed there was not much beyond. Estrades assured his master that the design on Algiers was a mere blind to cover an attempt to intercept the Spanish Plate fleet which Sandwich was to make in concert with a Portuguese squadron. 'It will certainly happen,' he added, 'if things do not change.'<sup>1</sup>

Indeed it seemed that the step that England was about to take was of so high an import that it must inevitably precipitate a war between the chief maritime powers. The Spanish Ambassador in London, as we know, was openly threatening hostilities if Charles persisted in his design to occupy Tangier. In Holland the sky was scarcely less stormy. The Dutch were still in a state of war with Portugal over affairs in the Far East and in Brazil, and the English marriage treaty naturally left it uncertain as to how far Charles intended to make the Portuguese cause his own. Like him therefore they determined to fit out a squadron to act against the corsairs in the Mediterranean, and De Ruyter was given the command. Against the Barbary states they had grievances enough, but it is clear they were not De Ruyter's first object any more than they were Sandwich's. A fleet of East Indiamen was due to arrive in the Texel. In view of the stormy relations with England, it was coming home North-about round Scotland, and instead of proceeding to the Straits De Ruyter was ordered to the Doggerbank to cover its home-coming. This duty accomplished he returned to the Texel, where he was met with the news that Sandwich had sailed to the southward, and that with the utmost speed he was to prepare his fleet to follow him. His corsair story, as usual, was nowhere believed. Every one smelt a fresh attack on Portugal in the wind.<sup>2</sup> Nor were they far wrong. The idea in the mind of the States

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres d'Estrades*, 144, July 25, 1661.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 159

was that De Ruyter should endeavour, in concert with the Spaniards, to prevent Sandwich molesting the Plate fleet. To this end a second squadron under Cornelis Evertzen was being brought forward to reinforce him, and on July 19, just a month after Sandwich had sailed, De Ruyter stood down Channel after him, bound for Cadiz, but fully expecting to have to fight his way into the port through an Anglo-Portuguese fleet.<sup>1</sup> To this delicate situation must be added the fact that the Dutch had just concluded a successful war in the Baltic. They were indeed fast recovering from the blows which Cromwell had dealt them, and it was a moment when they were little likely to sit down quietly under the new bid that England was making for maritime supremacy in the Levant and the Far East. Nothing therefore looked more probable than a great naval war, in which England and Portugal would be arrayed against Spain and Holland. Such a catastrophe was all that France could desire, and, judging by the line which Louis was soon to take, it is even possible that the prospect had no little to do with the encouragement he had given to the English King.

Thus, as the Earl of Sandwich's fleet swept southward, it could only appear as the opening move of a naval drama, of which no one could foresee the end. He was first in the field, and, finding that as yet all was quiet, he held on straight for Algiers. The weather, however, proved so adverse that he could not make the place, and as he was ill it was decided to run for Alicante. It was only a bout of fever, and so soon as the admiral was better they sailed again and appeared before Algiers at the end of July. The Dey proved obdurate, and as a bombardment failed to bring him to reason it was decided to make a formal

<sup>1</sup> G. Brandt, *La Vie de Michel de Ruiter*, Amsterdam, folio, 1698, p. 159.

attack on the mole. For a week, however, the weather kept obstinately foul, and by the end of that time, as in Mansell's case, the Algerines succeeded in making a formidable boom which seriously changed the prospects of the contemplated operation. In the existing state of affairs it was impossible to submit the fleet to any great risk, and in council of war it was decided to abandon the attempt. Sandwich, moreover, was now due at Lisbon to take up his mission as Envoy Extraordinary to settle the final details of the marriage. He therefore ordered Lawson, his vice-admiral, with ten sail to maintain the blockade and bring the Dey to reason by the destruction of his marine at sea, while he himself with five sail, in accordance with his original instructions, held away for the Tagus.<sup>1</sup> About the Straits he encountered De Ruyter and politely returned his salute, though without lowering his flag. He even gave him a full account of his failure at Algiers, and then passed on his way. By this time De Ruyter had received the whole of his reinforcements, but far from proceeding against the corsairs he was cleaning his ships in batches at Cadiz, ready for his real orders when they reached him. Scarcely had Sandwich left him when he received despatches that informed him of the mystery of his mission. With the utmost secrecy he was to open communications with the Duke of Medina-Celi, Governor of Andalusia, and to concert with him measures for defending the Plate fleet against Sandwich and the Portuguese. Thereupon he promptly followed in the British admiral's wake and put into Cadiz.<sup>2</sup>

Some such move was of course expected by Sandwich,

<sup>1</sup> See three letters to Pepys, dated September 10-11, published in *Hodgkin MSS. (Hist. MSS. Com. xv. ii.)*, p. 158-9, and Sandwich's 'Diary' in *Kennet's Register*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vie de De Ruiter*, p. 261.

but at present he had no instructions to bring pressure upon Spain. As yet she had given no sign of movement to resist the British occupation of the Straits. On the contrary, her Ambassador in London had been told to moderate his tone. Still that in no way relaxed Charles's warlike preparations. The second fleet, with a formidable military force, was being organised under the Earl of Peterborough. It could only be intended for Tangier, and there was little doubt that the quietness of Spain covered some deeper design to forestall him. Moreover, relations with Holland over the Portuguese question had become more strained than ever, owing to the presence of De Ruyter at the storm centre and to Charles's opposing their claim to trade with his new ally on an equal footing with the English.<sup>1</sup> The cloud that hung over Western Europe was daily growing darker, and at the end of August Sir Richard Fanshaw was appointed Envoy Extraordinary to Lisbon in order to relieve Sandwich and free his hand for action, while in the following week Peterborough's commission to command the Tangier expedition was signed. The military force was to consist of four foot regiments numbering three thousand men and a troop of a hundred horse. Part were to be newly raised and part made up from the Dunkirk garrison, and the whole was to be accompanied by a powerful naval escort.<sup>2</sup> Such a force took no little time to prepare. Thus, long before Peterborough could get away, De Ruyter's fleet, by still further reinforcements, had been brought up to its full strength of over twenty sail, besides vessels up

<sup>1</sup> Fanshaw's instructions, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> For Peterborough's commission and details of the troops, see Colonel Davis, *History of the Second Queen's Royal Regiment*, a work in which the author has printed or abstracted practically all the really important documents relating to the English occupation of Tangier from a military point of view.

the Straits on convoy service, and the situation had become in the highest degree critical. The English Government was fully sensible of the difficulties before them, and with a man like Monk as war minister they were well prepared to meet them. A peculiar danger was, as they had reason to fear, that in spite of the marriage treaty Peterborough might not be admitted to Tangier. A clause in his instructions specially contemplates such an eventuality. In case he found it so he was to return home, if—and this is the significant condition—‘if upon joint advice with Lord Sandwich you shall not agree upon some further design for our service.’ He had also, be it noted, express power to occupy any place that might be in a state of hostility to the British realm. Clearly, if Spain interfered, Spain was to suffer. She was especially anxious—and not without cause—not only about the Plate fleet but also about Gibraltar. Before she knew she could rely on a Dutch squadron, a message had been sent out to the Indies to divert the flota away from Cadiz and order it to Coruña instead, while at the cost of dislocating the military operations against Portugal large reinforcements were thrown into the Rock.

As yet, however, nothing was done openly on either side. Lawson was still operating before Algiers, blockading the port and playing havoc on its shipping with his cruisers. All September De Ruyter, in accordance with his secret orders, lay about Cape St. Vincent to cover the Plate fleet, while Sandwich remained in the Tagus doing honour to the new Queen of England and gracing the marriage rejoicings. In the first days of October, however, an alarm reached him that a combined Dutch and Spanish fleet was off Tangier. He had by this time ten sail under his orders, and in the midst of the festivities he suddenly put to sea and sent forward a despatch vessel to

Algiers to summon Lawson to his aid. A week later he was before Tangier, but not a sign of an enemy was to be seen, and in five days Lawson appeared. Tangier was still safe, but the situation was as strained as ever. De Ruyter had moved down to the Straits. Lawson, on his way from Algiers, had actually spoken with him off Malaga. The Dutch admiral informed him that he was there to make war on the corsairs. As a matter of fact, although De Ruyter had no intention of leaving the Straits till further orders, he was for the moment devoting his attention to the pirates. By the end of September he had been informed that the Plate fleet was safe in Coruña, and he had at once taken steps to employ his squadron in the business upon which it had ostensibly come out. Lawson was engaged in the same quest, and with rough ingenuity begged De Ruyter to communicate his private signal that they might co-operate more easily. De Ruyter, too old a hand to be drawn by so barefaced a confidence trick, refused, and with this information Lawson had joined Sandwich at Tangier.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly in the eyes of the two British admirals De Ruyter was not to be trusted, and all October and November they lay where they were, watching, with a division continually out in the 'Gut' of the Straits. Their force was none too strong nor their stores too plentiful, and as the weeks passed by without any news of Peterborough having sailed, Sandwich began to grow anxious. It was not till December 9 that the Dunkirk regiments were embarked, and this week the situation at Tangier grew in excitement. Sandwich's cruisers had got touch with a Dutch fleet in the Straits. One of his captains came in to report that Sir John Lawson had been seen 'flying to

<sup>1</sup> *Vie de De Ruiter*, p. 163.

windward amongst several of the Dutch fleet,' and that he had sighted seven of their men-of-war coming out of the Straits close aboard the Spanish coast, as though making for Cadiz.<sup>1</sup> The tension now grew extreme. A combined Dutch and Spanish squadron might appear at any moment to force an action before Peterborough could join. De Ruyter's ships were continually being seen hovering about, and Sandwich and Lawson, with the fleet in two divisions, took up positions on either side of the Straits in keen expectation of a fight. There they watched day after day, shadowing the Dutch ships and ready for immediate action, till at last it was known that De Ruyter, with the bulk of his squadron, had retired to Port Mahon in Minorca to careen.<sup>2</sup> The crisis passed, Lawson was despatched back to Algiers, and Sandwich remained on guard alone.

No sooner, however, was one danger over than another arose in its place. Just as the home Government had anticipated, the Moors were pressing round Tangier in a way that began to look ugly, and presently Sandwich received word from the 'Emperor of Fez' that the Spaniards were urging him to prevent the English getting hold of Tangier.<sup>3</sup> Similar information came in from other quarters. The admiral, according to a correspondent, was continually getting intelligence of the great endeavours in all parts of the world to prevent his Majesty possessing so considerable a place.<sup>4</sup> So serious indeed did the Moorish attitude grow that the Portuguese Governor, who was sullenly opposed to giving up the place to any one, was compelled to apply to Sandwich for a promise of assistance if his position became really

<sup>1</sup> Davis, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Sandwich's 'Journal' in Kennet's *Register*; *Vie de De Ruiter*, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> Estrades to Louis, February 6, 1662 (*Lettres et Mémoires d'Estrades*).

<sup>4</sup> Luke's Letter, February 17, 1662 (*S.P. Colonial, Tangiers*).

dangerous. There was a growing suspicion that a secret understanding with the Moors was the real means by which Spain in her helplessness hoped to prevent the surrender of Tangier. But if it was really on Moorish activity she relied for her end, her hand was ill-played, and it suddenly turned the game against her. On January 12, 1662, the Portuguese Governor, galled by the increasing pressure about him, sallied out for a foray. On his way he fell into an ambush and was killed. The result naturally was to embolden the hovering enemy still further, and a panic seized the garrison. In despair they sent to beg the British admiral for help. Sandwich was no man to let such an opportunity slip. Without a moment's hesitation he landed a large force of seamen under Sir John Stayner, his rear-admiral, and from that moment was practically in possession of the coveted port. At the same time Peterborough, with a fleet of nineteen sail, besides transports, was sailing at last from the Downs, and before January was out he had anchored in Tangier Bay.

Thus England had won the first point in the great game that was developing, and so far from Charles's policy having destroyed his prestige, the strength and decision he had displayed pointed quite the other way. No other power could show a success to put beside the hold which Charles had fixed upon the gates of the Mediterranean, nor had one of them seen its way to lifting a finger against him. Holland had threatened with De Ruyter's fleet, and it had accomplished nothing. The impotence of Spain was proclaimed aloud as her treasure fleet slunk home to a remote and inaccessible port. France had cut a scarcely more imposing figure. Through the greater part of the year 1661 a fleet had been in preparation in Brest and Rochelle under M. de Nieuchèse

and Du Quesne. It was destined for the Mediterranean, but not till the opening of 1662 was it able to assemble; and when at last it sailed in February it was only to be shattered by a storm and driven back to Rochelle. The intention had been that it should be joined in the Mediterranean by a squadron from Toulon; but there things were even more behindhand; and when the English flag was raised over Tangier castle, Charles was undisputed master of the seas.<sup>1</sup>

The contrast between the maritime position which England had won and that of France quickly brought home to Louis the mistake he had made, and before the English had been in Tangier a month he began to repent the countenance he had given to the move. As has been said, he probably had no idea the thing would be accomplished so easily. He had rather hoped to see the great maritime nations engaged in a mutually destructive struggle which would give breathing time for his own navy to grow up. Instead of this he found his naval position alarmingly weakened, and was face to face with the galling fact that the most formidable of the sea powers was securely established at the most important strategical point in the world.

To appreciate his nervousness we must remember that it was only two years since Charles Gustavus had attempted to secure the domination of the Baltic by seizing both sides of the Sound, and so alarming was the prospect that all the sea powers had combined to frustrate his intention. It was on this business that Sandwich had been occupied when he was summoned back to England with his fleet by the events which immediately preceded the Restoration. Now it happened that while the French Atlantic and Mediterranean squadrons lay helpless in port the

<sup>1</sup> Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 246 *et seq.*

young King was informed that Sandwich's captains, operating from Tangier, were surveying and taking soundings in places, which aroused his gravest suspicions. He was convinced that the English meant to establish themselves in the Straits in such a way that they would be able to make of it another Sound, and exact a toll from every ship that passed. With Colbert already at his elbow his hopes of power were based on the expansion of French commerce. Here at the outset was the prospect of an intolerable check, and he wrote to his Ambassador in England to impart his fears and bid him find out what was intended.<sup>1</sup> The results of the Ambassador's inquiries appear to have done little to quiet his master's apprehensions. Whatever else Sandwich and his captains were doing they had certainly already taken soundings to determine the position of a great mole which Peterborough was authorised to commence at Tangier, and experts and skilled masons were being sought for in Genoa and Leghorn, where the two most recent harbours had been constructed.

The energy and directness which the English Government were displaying in the matter are startling to us who know to how low a level Charles's administration was to sink. To the men of that day it must have seemed

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres et Mémoires d'Estrades*, Feb. 26, 1662. Louis's words are curious. He speaks of a suspected project of the English to take the 'Albousiennes Islands.' By this he can only mean either 'Alboran Island,' which lies midway between Capes Gata and Tres Fucos, or what is now called 'Albucemas Island,' on the Riff coast about a hundred miles within the Straits. In eighteenth century charts it is marked as 'Albouzemez.' It is difficult to see how the occupation of either place could have increased the strength of the English position. The inference is either that Louis mistook the character or position of the islands, or else that he had reason to believe that Tangier would not be given up to the English, and was afraid that, in spite of the schemes that were on foot to prevent them, they were determined to establish themselves somewhere or other in the mouth of the Mediterranean—if not at Tangier, then at Albucemas or Alboran.

that England was destined to rise only higher and higher from the point to which Cromwell had raised her, and Charles's dream of empire must have begun to look very like reality. 'Our main design'—so Peterborough's instructions ran—'in putting ourself to this great charge for making this addition to our dominions being to gain our subjects the trade of Barbary and to enlarge our dominions in that sea, and advance thereby the honour of our crown and the general commerce and wealth of our subjects.'<sup>1</sup> So the pleasure-loving King, whom posterity has come to regard as a mere feather-headed libertine, announced a true Mediterranean policy. 'It was the first official declaration that England must become a Mediterranean power, a distinct and bold advance upon the idea of mere commerce protection that had preceded it.' Nor must it be imagined that it was not in reality the voice of Charles that spoke. At this time his interest and earnestness in public affairs, and especially in all matters connected with the navy and imperial expansion, were real and active. With a united nation at his back, as it seemed, and surrounded by the best of Cromwell's men and his own, it was natural for him to believe that the power behind him was irresistible and fully equal to the achievement of his high ambition.

Everything seemed to give way before the prestige he had acquired. Lawson had done his work so thoroughly that in April he exacted a treaty from Algiers, and later in the year concluded similar arrangements with Tunis and Tripoli.<sup>2</sup> The French fleet, on the other hand, only further covered itself with contempt, and fell a prey to the evils which Mazarin had tried so hard to uproot. It

<sup>1</sup> *S.P. Colonial, Tangier*, i. No. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Kennet's Register*, 697; Fanshaw to Sec. Morice, Dec. 11-21, 1662, *Heathcote MSS.* 51; *Pepys' Diary*, Nov. 30.

will be remembered that in 1650, when things were going hard with him, he had found it necessary for the Queen-mother to resign the Grand Mastership of the Navy in order that it might be used to conciliate the powerful Duc de Vendôme, the King's uncle. Not only was it vested in him, but it was entailed on his issue; and now his son, the young Duc de Beaufort, had joined the fleet to serve his apprenticeship to the high office for which he was destined. With such a volunteer on board the admirals naturally soon found they were no longer in real command, and discipline went by the board. It was not till March that they managed between them to get through the Straits and commence operations. Still Beaufort and the admirals did nothing but quarrel. The junior officers followed suit; and though Louis had declared war magnificently on all the Barbary states, the fleet did nothing but make an ineffective cruise along the African coast, and then ignominiously put into Toulon empty-handed.<sup>1</sup> The situation was all the more annoying because Louis was bent on establishing a foothold in Africa similar to that which Charles had secured at Tangier, and the engineer he had sent out to select a spot had just returned with a report in favour of Stora, the modern Philippeville, between Tunis and Algiers. But such was the disorganisation at Toulon that there seemed little hope of getting an expedition started. The jealousy and suspicion which the French authorities displayed towards the English marks clearly the prevalent feeling. In March Lawson had been refused victual at Toulon. In July three other English vessels put in to refit, and Du Quesne was sure it was but an excuse to see what preparations were being made there. Possibly it was so; for De Ruyter, who still lay at the Balearic islands awaiting

<sup>1</sup> Jal, *Du Quesne*, 257 *et seq.*, and 184, *n.*

orders, had detached two ships thither, and it is possible the English were shadowing them. At any rate, Du Quesne reported, with one of his spiteful snarls at his superiors, that he was taking the greatest care that the Englishmen saw nothing in the state of affairs which might arouse their contempt for the French navy. 'If that should happen,' he wrote, 'nothing could console me.'<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, in another project which at this time began to occupy the French King's mind that we seem to see the most noteworthy effect of the English success. For some time past a provincial official called Ricquet had been making preliminary surveys to determine the possibility of connecting the Atlantic with the Mediterranean by a canal through Languedoc. Whether it was by the instructions of the Government is not clear, but in November 1662 he laid his scheme before Colbert, pointing out that if the project were put into effect the Straits of Gibraltar would cease to be a *passage nécessaire* for France, and that the bulk of the trade, which found an emporium in Cadiz, would be diverted to French ports. Heroic as was this remedy for the defects of the French position, it was immediately taken up in all seriousness. Detailed surveys were ordered; by the spring of 1663 they were complete; and a commission was appointed to report on the execution of the gigantic work.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the English were equally busy strengthening their hold on the Straits. It became clearer every day that they were not to be permitted to enjoy calmly the vantage point they had gained. The Spaniards and Dutch were negotiating for a joint fleet against Algiers—

<sup>1</sup> Hodgkin MSS. 162; Jal, *Du Quesne*, 275.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de Ricquet*, p. 304 &c.; *Lettres de Colbert*, vol. iv. *passim*.

in itself a suspicious indication. In Cadiz the Duke of Albuquerque was preparing a powerful armada. Fanshaw had reason to believe the Spanish Government was in communication not only with the Dutch but also with Guylan, the 'Emperor of Fez,' who by this time had made himself master of the whole of Morocco, with the exception of Salee, Tetuan, and the Spanish port of Ceuta. He had appeared in the neighbourhood of Tangier with a formidable army. Hostilities were constantly occurring between his men and the British garrison, till it was thought well to make a serious sally. On May 3 it was attempted; the Moors were driven headlong from their advanced positions; but so hotly did the English troops pursue their advantage that they eventually found themselves surrounded, and were beaten back with heavy loss. For the time, however, Guylan had had enough, and, moving off against Tetuan, began to make overtures for peace. Still he was not to be trusted. Fanshaw believed that the intention of the Spanish Government was that Albuquerque should blockade Tangier, while Guylan suddenly returned to attack it from the land side. He convinced himself that this was the meaning of Guylan's recent appearance before the place, and that it was only the opportune arrival of Lawson from a cruise up the Straits that had frustrated the design.<sup>1</sup> Under the circumstances it was determined to replace Peterborough by a more experienced officer. A man of the right stamp was at hand in Lord Rutherford, the late Governor of Dunkirk. A Scottish soldier of fortune, who had risen with high distinction to the rank of

<sup>1</sup> Fanshaw to Clarendon, October 21, 1662 (*Heathcote MSS.* p. 37; cf. Duro, *Armada Española*, v. cap. iv. and App. p. 446). Albuquerque's fleet, according at least to his official orders, was intended to cover the arrival of the Plate fleet, and then to operate against Portugal.

Lieutenant-General in the French service, he represented the last word of the Low Country school of military science; and with the surrender of Dunkirk he was free for employment. A fat pension induced Peterborough to resign, while an earldom persuaded Rutherford to take his place. In the spring of 1663 all was ready to make the occupation of Tangier a reality. Lawson had come home in the winter to replace his spent ships, and was ready with a fresh fleet to take out the new Governor with reinforcements and everything that was necessary for establishing a naval station. In spite of his growing financial embarrassments Charles had decided to set aside 30,000*l.* a year for constructing a harbour, and a contract to that effect had been signed. The contractors were Rutherford, now Earl of Teviot, Lawson the admiral, and Sir Hugh Cholmley, an engineer who had recently completed a pier at Whitby.

They were welcomed at their destination by the news that Schomberg, at the head of his Anglo-Portuguese army, had inflicted a crushing defeat at the frontier upon Don John of Austria, the Spanish General. The victory greatly relieved the situation by crippling the power of Spanish interference at Tangier. Teviot, moreover, at a first view, expressed himself as highly contented with the place,<sup>1</sup> and got to work at once upon the fortifications. Two advanced forts were commenced, and the whole line of outworks strengthened with calthrops, mines, retrenchments, and every device which the latest military science could suggest. Scarcely were the additions complete when Guylan, who had received the submission of Tetuan, appeared in force, and made a determined attack upon the new works. As the assault

<sup>1</sup> Fanshaw to Sec. Bennet, June 7, 1663, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 110.

was delivered between twelve and one, when the men were dining, it was to some extent a surprise; but, thanks to Tevot's scientific preparation, and the energy with which the troops showered hand-grenades upon the Moors, they were driven back with heavy loss. So soon as the Moors had retired, Tevot, being a man of grim humour, sent Guylan a letter complaining of the way he had chosen to pay his visit of welcome. He objected to being disturbed at his meals, and reminded the Moor that it was not customary or polite to pay calls at dinner time. Guylan appears to have been very favourably impressed. He replied in the same spirit, and a correspondence ensued which resulted in a truce for six months.<sup>1</sup>

The cessation secured, Tevot, after seeing the works on the mole fairly started, went home to report to the King and obtain the men and stores which the place required. His chief demand was for two hundred horse, for already he had grasped the importance of the offensive in oriental warfare. Nothing was denied him. He was thoroughly trusted, and Tangier, as Fanshaw put it, was regarded as one of the best cards in the English hand, 'which must not be trumped.'<sup>2</sup> It had been constituted a separate department of state under what was called the Tangier Council, of which the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, Monk, Southampton, the Governor, the Master of the Ordnance, the Treasurer of the Navy, and Samuel Pepys were members. Though Pepys could discern something very curious in the accounts Tevot presented, none of the great men said a word, and he, like a good civil servant, held his tongue. So Tevot had all he asked, even the permission to take over Salee

<sup>1</sup> Davis, 43 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Fanshaw to Clarendon, October 21, 1662, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 39.

castle, if it were offered him, as was not unlikely, since it was in the hands of Guylan's hard-pressed rival.<sup>1</sup>

The energy which Tevot displayed at home was no more than was wanted. During his absence the danger that had been menacing Tangier had been making head fast. No sooner had his back been turned than it was known that Guylan had had an interview with a special envoy from the King of Spain between Tetuan and the Spanish possession of Ceuta. The news was quickly followed by a still more serious discovery. A short time previously a German engineer called Martin Beckman, or Boeckmann, had arrived at Tangier to offer his professional services to the British.<sup>2</sup> Employment was refused him, but he was apparently given to understand that he might make himself useful as a spy in Spain. In any case he proceeded to Cadiz and made overtures to the Duke of Medina-Celi, Governor of Andalusia, as an expert familiar with the defences of Tangier, and ready to assist in the recovery of the place to the Spanish crown. The King authorised the Duke to take the man into the royal service, but desired him not to commit himself to anything else until they had heard further from Guylan. Shortly after this Beckman gave warning to the English Consul at Cadiz that a design against Tangier was on foot, and, in a few weeks, so well did he prosper that he secured copies of a series of letters from the King to the Duke of Medina-Celi, in which the whole plan of campaign was laid down. So at least he alleged, and in England the documents were believed to be authentic. The scheme appears to have turned mainly

<sup>1</sup> Pepys's *Diary*, September 30, 1663; *S.P. Colonial, Tangier*, Bundle ii. October 20.

<sup>2</sup> His name is variously spelt, but afterwards, when he rose to high distinction in the British service, he was usually known as Sir Martin Beckman.

upon the use of the galleons of the Indian Guard. At the moment they came in, when no one would suspect them of further action, instead of careening they were at once to proceed to sea again, and in concert with the Cadiz galley squadron to make a swift descent on Tangier and seize it by a *coup de main*.<sup>1</sup>

The whole of these documents were handed to Teviot, so that before he left England he was fully aware of what was on foot. Before the end of the year his preparations were complete, and he sailed with Lawson in time to reach Tangier on January 14, 1664, a week before the expiration of the six months' truce. A further move was made at the same time by sending Sir Richard Fanshaw as Ambassador to Madrid with instructions to mediate between Spain and Portugal, and among other matters to request immediate permission for British ships to use the Spanish ports in the Balearic islands and the Two Sicilies, and especially Port Mahon in Minorca. To further enable him to force the Spanish hand he too was furnished with copies of Beckman's documents.<sup>2</sup>

On Teviot's arrival he found that the Acting-Governor, anxious at the approaching termination of the truce and having no news of his chief's return, had procured its prolongation for two months on condition that nothing further should be done on the mole or the forts. To this Teviot politely told Guylan he could not agree, as his master had ordered him to proceed with the works. Hostilities consequently reopened, and at the end of

<sup>1</sup> The King of Spain to the Duke of Medina-Celi, September 22 (o.s.) 1663 (*Heathcote MSS.* p. 130). Despatch of Colonel Fitzgerald, Acting-Governor of Tangier, October 24 (*S.P. Colonial, Tangier*, ii.). Despatch of the Cadiz Consul, October 29, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Sir Richard Fanshaw*, 1702. Instruction dated January 14, 1664, p. 1 *et seq.*

February Guylan attacked in force. After a few hours' defence Teviot ordered a sally, and with such judgment and energy was it pushed home that the Moors were completely defeated with the loss of a prominent general and his standard. They returned baffled, vowing Teviot was the devil himself. They had stories that he was invulnerable, that he never slept except leaning up against some of his new works, and that he had invented flying ships and guns that ran alone.<sup>1</sup> The impression was real and well justified. The extraordinary intuition he displayed for dealing with orientals marks him for a high place among our early proconsuls. His conduct after the victory further reveals his power. Some of the English dead had been found mutilated. Instead of retaliating he caused the bodies of the Moors that were in his hands to be washed and clothed in fine linen and laid on biers strewn with flowers. Then, preceded by a flag of truce, he and all his force in review order solemnly escorted them to his outermost lines and delivered them to the Moors. The effect was profound, and the Moorish warriors with one accord bared their heads and ungirded their waistcloths, humbled almost to adoration.

After the victory the works went on apace. The main trouble was lime, which the Spanish officials did their best to prevent his getting, going so far as to treat his men, who came to fetch it, not only as enemies but as rebels. Still Teviot was not disheartened. 'A gallant man,' he wrote, 'never wanted arms.' His only doubt was the rankling memory of Dunkirk, surrendered after all the energy he had spent on its fortifications. He was sure, he said, that in spite of every difficulty Tangier in

<sup>1</sup> *Brief Relation of the Present State of Tangiers*, 1664.

two years' time, unless given up or sold, would be a very comfortable place and a pleasant too.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Lawson with the fleet was exhibiting his characteristic activity. During the past summer the Algerines, in spite of the treaty, had been behaving as badly as ever and preying on British ships in the Straits. They had even captured Teviot's own ketch. To Algiers therefore Lawson again betook himself. By the end of March he had made them disgorge eighteen English prizes. 'But,' as he wrote, 'till it please God to make them feel some smart, no peace can be made with them but what is worse than war.'<sup>2</sup> So he remained where he was, blockading the port and capturing its cruisers with his wonted success till the work was interrupted about the end of May by a melancholy summons.

One of those sudden disasters had occurred which were destined to become so familiar to British arms on African soil. All through April, by a well-conceived series of reconnaissances and patrols, Teviot had been pushing his enemy further and further back while he completed the lines which he considered the nature of the ground demanded. His officers delighted to say, he fought with one hand while he built with the other, and that it was only half his business to beat the Moors. On May 3, the anniversary of the disaster in Peterborough's time, he was engaged in another such operation in force. He was acting with his usual boldness and with all the skill and care that his high experience could suggest, when in a wooded place he suddenly found himself and his staff cut off by the enemy and his troops surrounded by overwhelming numbers. In spite of the steadiness of

<sup>1</sup> Teviot to Consul Westcombe at Cadiz, April 15, 1664, *Heathcote MSS.* 148; Davis, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Lawson to Fanshaw, March 28, 1664, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 148.

the men, practically the whole force was annihilated. Some thirty-five officers and gentlemen volunteers and nearly four hundred rank and file were killed, and with them Teviot himself. Not ten men, it was said, escaped to bring the tale, and they told how the Governor had seized a hill with all the men he could rally, and there had died fighting to the last and dealing death around him. So perished a gallant and accomplished Scottish soldier, the first of a long list of others like him who were to lead the stormy way that Great Britain had begun to tread. Years afterwards Pepys was assured on the spot that the death of Lord Teviot was the fate of the place, 'for he took all the ways to have made it great.'<sup>1</sup>

Their victory won, the Moors flung themselves upon the British lines, but only to learn that if the Devil was dead his spirit lived. They were hurled back, and so great were Guylan's losses in the two actions that for a while he was forced to leave the place in peace. Then a reaction set in. The garrison became demoralised and mutinous. The opportune arrival of two royal frigates availed to check the evil, but all was not safe till Lawson, who had flown to the rescue at the first summons, appeared in the bay with the bulk of his squadron.

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *Life, Journal, and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys (Tangier Diary)*, i. 444.

## CHAPTER XXI

### TANGIER AND ITS ENEMIES

TRAGIC as was its conclusion, the governorship of Lord Teviot had firmly established the British occupation of the Straits. It was none too soon. New danger was in the air, and Lawson's ready response to his summons was doubly welcome. 'Sir John Lawson,' wrote Fanshaw on June 5, 1664, 'is now at Tangier worthily concerned for a place of that consequence after so great a loss as it lately sustained, and especially when the rumours are so hot of a war with Holland.' For the old quarrel was burning into a flame again, and on all sides the horizon looked dark for England, and especially for her Mediterranean power. Holland steadily refused redress for the outrages which English merchants had suffered, and De Ruyter with a fresh 'corsair' squadron had been sent down to the Straits. The States had requested the British Government to co-operate with him against Algiers; but, although they had a squadron ready under Sir Robert Holmes ostensibly for that purpose, they had refused, and Holmes had sailed to the southward. His real orders were to run down to Cape Verde and there exact reprisals upon the ships and factories of the Dutch East India Company. At the time this was of course a secret, but the worst was suspected, and De Ruyter received orders to keep a careful watch on Lawson. Spain too was still hostile and known to be

in communication with Guylan. France, far from friendly, had a powerful expedition on the point of sailing from Toulon, and no one knew its destination.

The strategical value of Tangier had never been so apparent, and everything seemed to threaten it. 'Guylan,' continued Fanshaw in the despatch already quoted, 'hath been at them again, but bravely repulsed. The truth is, I believe there is no nation that knows Tangier which doth not wish it in any hand rather than that in which it is.' Charles was equally impressed with its importance. Neither danger nor disaster could shake his determination to hold the vantage point he had won. A new Spanish ambassador was sent to London to propose friendly terms upon which the place might be surrendered; but it was only to receive from the King's lips an answer so sharp as to make further discussion of the subject impossible. So soon as Teviot's disaster was known in England, Colonel Fitzgerald, an Irish officer who had formerly been Deputy-Governor, was sent out with reinforcements to take charge, and he actively proceeded to complete Teviot's works. By the middle of July, Fanshaw could write home again, 'Now that all is exceedingly well at Tangier, even before the recruits' arrival, give me leave to say my thoughts: that, whether the King have peace with all the world or must have war with all the world, nothing like Tangier, with the mole speedily finished to perfection, in order to the quiet enjoyment of the one or vigorous prosecution of the other.'<sup>1</sup>

The far-reaching ideas of which Tangier was the symbol showed no sign of abating. At this time was published a rose-coloured account of the place, and the apology the author makes for it in his preface is highly

*Letters*, p. 166, to Sec. Bennet, July 19-29, 1664.

significant. He justifies the costly works: 'Firstly, because here is set down the great passage to the wealth of Africa and America, where an acre of ground is a barony and a rood a duchy. Secondly, because this and the country round is like to be that renowned scene of action which will render us considerable in this last age of the world. The French intend to make themselves famous by seeking out a convenient footing in this country; no doubt we shall be so also for keeping ours.'<sup>1</sup>

Such enthusiasm was certainly not without justification at the moment. By this time the atmosphere in the Mediterranean was clearing. All through the summer Lawson and De Ruyter had been watching one another, each suspecting the other of an intention to make some sudden attack. About August Lawson began to get the upper hand. Thanks to Fanshaw's diplomacy and Charles's resolute attitude the Spaniards at least officially had recognised the *status quo* at Tangier, and were turning their backs on the Dutch. Lawson was allowed liberty of Spanish ports for water and cleaning, while De Ruyter was everywhere refused pratique. Thus, as Lawson shifted between Cadiz and Malaga, Tangier and Algiers, keeping his fleet clean and well furnished, De Ruyter was at his wit's end to keep his eye on him, and every day his ships grew fouler. One day, early in September, the two admirals met off Malaga. Lawson had been informed by the Spaniards that De Ruyter had just received orders so pressing that the courier who carried them had travelled from Holland in seven days. With cordial civilities he did his best to find out what the orders were, and, failing, held away to cover Tangier. The fact was that news had come of Holmes's reprisals

<sup>1</sup> *A Description of Tangiers*, 1664.

at Cape Verde. The mysterious orders which De Ruyter had received were that he was to follow him with all speed, and a few weeks later, after vainly trying to careen his ships at Cadiz, he disappeared out into the Atlantic.<sup>1</sup>

The French danger had also passed. The Toulon expedition, which had grown to sixty sail of war-ships, galleys, and transports, after ominously assembling at Port Mahon under the Duc de Beaufort and Du Quesne, had sailed away up the sea, and were soon busy with Louis's African venture to the eastward of Algiers, and well away from the British sphere of action. Tangier was left in peace, with the result that by October the whole of the lines and outworks which Teviot had projected were complete, and thus, as the war drew nearer and nearer, Colonel Fitzgerald felt he was able to take good care of himself and his charge.<sup>2</sup> In view of the now inevitable war with Holland, Lawson went home to take up a higher command, and Admiral Thomas Allin, who had been one of Rupert's captains in his pirate days and was then Commander-in-Chief in the Downs, came out to succeed him. Before he had been more than a month on the station he had completed Lawson's work by procuring from Algiers a renewal of the old treaty, and in reporting his success he was able to send news of an event beside which even Teviot's disaster must have seemed eclipsed.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the summer Beaufort with his formidable force had been busy making good his hold on the African coast. The place ultimately chosen was not Stora but

<sup>1</sup> *Michel de Ruiter*, p. 208 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Fitzgerald to Fanshaw, October 8-18, 1664, *Heathcote MSS.* 167.

<sup>3</sup> *Heathcote MSS.* November 13-23, 1664, p. 169. *Fanshaw's Letters*, December 2 (n.s.), p. 347.

Gigeri, now called Jigelli, a little to the westward.<sup>1</sup> On July 22 the place had been captured with considerable skill, but at the cost of some four hundred killed, besides wounded. Still the news was hailed in France, especially by the mercantile community, with high satisfaction, and a convoy was despatched from Toulon under the Marquis de Martel with an abundance of stores and two troops of horse. The idea which Louis had in his mind was the establishment of a permanent naval base similar to that which the English were creating at Tangier. Colbert, however, was unwilling to commit himself definitely to Gigeri until it was clearly ascertained to be the most suitable spot. He called for a report from the naval officers. Du Quesne, though not entirely satisfied with the place, thought it might be made a useful harbour, and there was every prospect of its being held. About the middle of October, Beaufort, having seen the military well established, moved to the westward to make an attempt on Bougie, leaving Martel and his vessels in the road. No sooner was he gone than a sort of panic appears to have seized the troops, and, as some said, the officers as well. In constant skirmishes with the enemy they had been suffering serious loss. In spite of their efforts their assailants were still pressing closer, even erecting fresh works, till the cry was raised that the French lines were no longer tenable. From hour to hour, as the enemy's numbers increased, the panic grew till it became uncontrollable. The troops openly said that, unless the place were evacuated, they would desert and turn Turk, and finally the officers decided to re-embark them in Martel's ships. Four days after Beaufort had left, it was done — in the dead of night and in haste. Sick and wounded, the whole

<sup>1</sup> In contemporary documents the place is called Gigeri, Gigheria, Gergily, Gigery, Jejure, and the like.

of the stores and baggage, guns to the number of over a hundred — all were abandoned: and so in a shameless flight ended Louis's first attempt to extend his power in the Mediterranean. In France the shock was severely felt. Everything was done to hush up the disgrace, but the loss had been too great for concealment, and the disappointment of the merchants too deep. And to fill the bitter cup there was always Tangier growing every month in importance to show what might have been achieved.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in comparison with the French misfortunes, the English position on the eve of Charles's first struggle for the dominion of the sea was highly favourable — so favourable indeed that Tangier was left to shift for itself. When, towards the end of November, Allin returned from Algiers with his squadron, he found orders awaiting him to seize the Dutch Smyrna convoy as it attempted to pass the Straits. It was in anticipation of some such stroke that De Ruyter had been left shadowing Lawson all the summer; but now the coast was clear. War had not yet been declared, though it had practically begun. By this time it was known that when De Ruyter left the Mediterranean he had sailed southward against the English factories in Guinea in revenge for what Holmes had done. Allin's orders therefore were but another step into the inevitable struggle that had to be fought out. Unfortunately, before the Smyrna convoy appeared, Allin met with a severe disaster. One evening about the middle of December, having sighted what he believed to be a Dutch fleet in the last of the daylight, he gave chase through the Straits. It was a foul and rainy night, and so dark that he and four of his captains, in their eagerness, ran themselves ashore on the Spanish coast near Gibraltar. Two of the frigates were totally wrecked, and, though he managed to

<sup>1</sup> Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 313-26; Guérin, iii. 156-8.

get his flagship off again, and to save the other two frigates, they were all severely damaged. He was in this plight when another Dutch fleet of fourteen sail appeared, in which were three men-of-war. He had now but seven of his nine vessels left, but he attacked at once, crippled as he was. The three men-of-war escaped into Cadiz. Of the merchantmen he sank two and captured two, one of which proved a rich prize. Under the circumstances it was a creditable achievement, and, but for the unlucky mishap that preceded it, would probably have accomplished all that had been expected.<sup>1</sup>

In pursuance probably of the old policy of concentration on the enemy's main fleet, Allin was now ordered home with a convoy, and the Straits were abandoned to the Dutch. Some anxiety was felt by men on the spot. De Ruyter was still somewhere to the southward; three Dutch men-of-war were in Cadiz, only waiting for Allin's disappearance to put to sea, and private vessels were also being equipped.<sup>2</sup> To give heart to the garrison Lord Belasyse came out as Governor—a man of little military reputation, but energetic and sanguine, and a great person at Court. His appointment at least put an end to a demoralising rumour. During the winter it had been persistently reported that Louis, having failed at Gigeri, had offered to purchase Tangier, and that Charles had agreed to sell. Quidnuncs could even name the sum.<sup>3</sup>

But the tale could not survive the arrival of Lord

<sup>1</sup> Allin to Fanshaw, December 17, 1664, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 172, and *S.P. Dom.* cvi. f. 111. Same to same, December 25, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 172 and *S.P. Dom.* cvii. f. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Same to Coventry, Gibraltar Bay, January 15, 1665, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 174. He did not get away till the end of February, *ibid.* p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> Fanshaw to Lord Holles, March 29, 1665, *Heathcote MSS.* 183. W. Blunden to Fanshaw, April 10, *ibid.*, where he says the rumour arose from an English frigate transporting French treasure.

Belasyse, and only served to mark the increasing importance of the place. 'I conceive,' wrote a merchant to Fanshaw, 'it is the most important place in Christendom for his Majesty and the good of our nation; and when the mole is built and magazines, it may maintain itself with little or no charge to the Crown. It was an obscure place and not known till delivered to his Majesty, and now the whole world sees how much the case is altered by the change of possessor.' Fanshaw himself was entirely of this opinion, and his only anxiety was lest Belasyse should not be left ships enough, as he said, 'to make our stake good in the Mediterranean against an upstart fleet which the Dutch were then scrambling together.'

But no squadron was spared for Tangier, though letters of marque were sent out for private ships; and during the summer, while the war was raging in the Narrow Seas, the upstart Dutch fleet blockaded the port. But it mattered little. It had been fully provisioned and the mole was so far advanced that a battery had been established upon it that kept the enemy at a distance. The blockade was consequently loose and easily run by the British frigates that from time to time appeared with convoys or despatches. Merchantmen too were able to use it as a port of refuge in running the gauntlet through the Straits. In the autumn a fleet of twenty Levant merchantmen and victuallers for Tangier, under a weak convoy, arrived. The Dutch attacked, and though they defeated the war ships, all but four of the merchantmen got safely into Tangier and were able to pursue their voyage.<sup>1</sup> The effect was—according to a calculation made for the first year of the war—that the Dutch did not capture enough prizes to cover much more than half the cost of main-

<sup>1</sup> *S.P. Colonial, Tangier*, iv. f. 10.

taining their squadron.<sup>1</sup> In vain the Spanish officials in Andalusia did their best to thwart the progress of the port; in vain they continued their intrigues with Guylan. The place throve in spite of every difficulty; the mole pushed further and further to seaward; and in the face of every enemy England was slowly locking her hold upon the Mediterranean.>

If to Spain and Holland the situation was unendurable, still more so was it to France. It was impossible for Louis, seeing what his ambitions were, to sit quietly and see his fetters forged. The first battle in the war had resulted in a defeat for the Dutch. It seemed certain that, if left alone, their sea power must be crushed, and this Louis could not permit. It would mean that England, well placed as she was, would rule undisputed upon the seas both within and without the Straits, and that hers, not his, would be the inheritance of Spain. After an ineffectual effort, therefore, to induce England to make peace, he resolved to force her into it by a declaration of war.

It was no fancied danger that disturbed him. Already at Brussels, in view of the certainty that sooner or later France must throw in her lot with the Dutch, the most far-sighted of Englishmen was at work. No man so clearly foresaw the formidable expansion of France as Sir William Temple, and no one so justly apprehended the way to curb it. As minister resident at Brussels, he was deep in the subject with the Spanish Viceroy, and at his suggestion was urging upon Charles's Government an offensive and defensive alliance with Spain against the coming danger. It was always in Flanders, since the days of Alva, that had sprung and thriven the idea that the salva-

<sup>1</sup> Consul Westcombe of Cadiz to Fanshaw, December 31, 1665, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 220.

tion of Spain lay in an understanding with England, and it was from there the idea was most likely to grow to fruition. But in the design which Temple was formulating there was a new factor that made its possibilities more formidable than ever. A main feature of the proposed alliance, suggested apparently by the Viceroy, was that Spain should permit England to establish a naval base in Sardinia. With a squadron of frigates acting from there, and the command of the Straits at Tangier, it seemed that the French trade in the Mediterranean, on which Louis so much depended for his resources, might be annihilated. Temple received the idea with enthusiasm, and for doing so has been ridiculed even by his admirers. 'In ascribing to our naval power,' says his latest biographer, 'an overwhelming influence upon the affairs of Europe, Temple was not justified either by past history or by the events of this particular war.'<sup>1</sup> But he is certainly justified by future history and the wars to come. Nor is it clear that, if Spain and England had united for naval action in the Mediterranean, the result of the particular war might not have been radically changed. The French Toulon fleet, as we shall see, could never have passed the Straits, and the diversion, which prevented a decisive English victory in the Narrow Seas, would never have been made.

Of that at least there can be no doubt whatever. The French plan of campaign was founded on a concentration of their own fleet with that of the Dutch in the North Sea. Beaufort, who was in command at Toulon, was to come out of the Straits and effect a junction with the Atlantic squadron under Du Quesne; and, unless they were in time to pass the Channel before the English fleet got to sea, they were to endeavour to join hands with

<sup>1</sup> Courtenay, *Memoirs of Sir W. Temple*, 1836, i. 73.

the Dutch main fleet north-about. To formulate the plan was to be at once confronted with the difficulty of getting Beaufort out of the Mediterranean. 'To ensure the security of M. de Beaufort's passage,' wrote Colbert, 'I think the only way is to increase the number of his vessels by uniting with them a division of those which are at present on the west coast, and to strengthen his squadron with the largest number of fire-ships possible.' As a further precaution he desired that the ships detailed for this purpose from the Atlantic ports should go down as far as the Straits and effect the junction there; and even so Colbert was doubtful whether the operation could be carried out successfully unless they were sure of a friendly reception in Cadiz.<sup>1</sup>

With this project in view war was declared in January 1666, but no sooner was the step definitely taken than Sir Jeremy Smith, an old Commonwealth officer, was despatched with a strong squadron to the Straits. His mission was primarily convoy duty to protect the Levant trade; but Colbert saw his whole combination struck at the root, and sent down urgent orders to Beaufort to get to sea immediately, and drive Smith from the Mediterranean before he could enter the Straits. But Beaufort was unable to move. In despair Colbert ordered the Toulon squadron of galleys to be fitted for sea with all speed, for, as he said, Smith would probably be reinforced before Beaufort could get at him. To spur the galley commander to his highest efforts he told him he had the chance of striking the winning stroke of the war—the *coup de partie*—in the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> Colbert at any rate did not conceal from himself where the key of

<sup>1</sup> Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 373.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 59 and 69, February 15-25 and March 6-16, 1666.

the situation lay, and the anxiety which he displayed certainly does not belie the importance which Temple had attached to naval operations in the Mediterranean.

By the middle of February Sir Jeremy Smith reached Cadiz, where he was allowed to water, and during March he was about the Straits and in touch with Tangier with fifteen or sixteen frigates. The effect was immediate. Beaufort's intended move was checked. In vain Colbert dwelt on the insignificance of the English force and urged his admiral to attack. So long as Smith held the station Beaufort would not or could not stir. Seamen were hard to get, and yet he kept adding to his squadron and fitting out fire-ship after fire-ship to the derision of the English.<sup>1</sup> Besides his fire-ships and auxiliary vessels he had thirty men-of-war of his own of all rates, and eight of the 'upstart' fleet, which the Dutch had scrambled together and which had retired before Smith into Toulon.<sup>2</sup> Even so he did not move till a squadron of twelve galleys was ready to accompany him to the Straits. Never was the advantage of the Tangier station more emphatically declared, and yet at the critical moment it was thrown away.

At home the naval action of the French was not the gravest anxiety. Louis was also engaged in a formidable diplomatic campaign to isolate England by a widespread coalition of all the powers that had reason to be jealous of her predominance on the sea. In London therefore the Government was rightly absorbed in the importance of crushing the Dutch sea power before the threatened coalition could take effect. The campaign of the previous

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 69; Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 409; *Heathcote MSS.* 243.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that Beaufort's fleet contained a hospital ship. The other auxiliaries were tenders or 'Matelotes' to larger ships. Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 390; *Heathcote MSS.* 251.

year had fully convinced them of the necessity of concentrating at all hazards an overwhelming force in the North Sea. Its results had been far from satisfactory. The main fleet had been under the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, and Sandwich, with Sir John Lawson as senior vice-admiral. At the battle of Lowestoft they had done well enough. But in the death of Lawson, who was mortally wounded in the action, the fleet lost its most ardent spirit, and the fruits of the victory had not been gathered with sufficient activity. The two Princes betook themselves ashore to enjoy the sweets of the victory, and Sandwich had been left in sole command. In his inadequate or unwilling hands everything that the late success should have secured was lost. As usual the Dutch were plunged into demoralising political dissensions over their defeat, and could not agree on the appointment of commanders for the next year's campaign. De Ruyter was the only man likely to secure confidence. Everything depended on his safe return, and he was still no one quite knew where. Having taken a full revenge for Holmes's reprisals on the West Coast of Africa, he had proceeded to the West Indies, and, after doing considerable damage both there and off Newfoundland, was feeling his way home along the coast of Norway. It was a hazardous end to his great cruise. Encumbered with prizes, and with his fleet barely seaworthy, he seemed a certain prey to an admiral in command of the North Sea. Yet Sandwich, with everything in his favour, failed to intercept him. By a miracle, which he devoutly attributed to the special intervention of Providence, he reached the Texel in safety, and just in time to receive the command of the main fleet, and to give new heart to the despondent Dutch with the story of his long and eventful cruise.

Monk at the Admiralty was naturally furious. Sand-

wich had further clouded his reputation with some irregularities about prize money which the stern old Cromwellian made the most of. A change of command became inevitable. The Duke of York was persuaded not to endanger his life further. Sandwich, to ease his fall, was appointed Ambassador to Spain with instructions to complete the negotiations which Fanshaw had been hitherto conducting. Rupert was to remain, but not alone. As usual, when in a difficulty, it was to Monk the country looked to save the situation. During the terrible year that had passed the redoubtable old General had remained alone in London to fight the plague when every one else had run away to Oxford, and he had been conducting single-handed practically the whole administration of the country. With considerable nervousness the King was persuaded to make a still higher call upon his patriotism, and sent for him to see if he could be induced to go to sea again. The devoted old officer immediately consented with the sole proviso that his wife must not be told; and when it was known that Cromwell's right-hand man, the hero of the old war, was girding on his sword again, victory was regarded as certain.

It was now apparently that the fatal though perhaps necessary step was taken. Monk, as we know, had always been in favour of sacrificing the Straits to his inflexible belief in concentration on the enemy's main fleet. Had he been aware of the inefficient condition of the Toulon squadron his orthodoxy might have been relaxed. For a time it even looked as though his old strategy was to be modified. While his preparations for the coming campaign were pushed forward with all possible vigour, a small squadron was detached to carry Sandwich to Spain. It reached Coruña in the middle of March, while Colbert was doing his best to drive

Beaufort to sea. In the south, where Beaufort's weakness was better known, it was naturally believed that Sandwich's squadron had come to reinforce Smith and place him in a condition to hold the Straits. But as a matter of fact the orders it brought were the reverse of what was expected. Smith and his squadron were recalled. It had never apparently been intended that he should remain longer than was necessary to collect the homeward bound Levant trade. Smith, moreover, was an officer on whom Monk placed great reliance, and such men, as he never ceased to lament, were growing scarcer every day among the crowd of dandy captains whom the Court inflicted on him. So once more the Straits were abandoned at the most critical hour. Still, Monk can hardly be blamed. It may be that to risk a squadron at the Straits would have been the more brilliant and daring strategy, but it is as certain as war can be that had either plan of campaign been drastically carried out all would have gone well.

On April 19 Beaufort at last put to sea. In ten days' time he was at Alicante, where he was told that Smith had left Cadiz homeward bound on March 25. The information was not accurate. Perhaps Beaufort did not believe it. At any rate he moved cautiously down to Malaga, and there anchored for further intelligence and to allow the galley squadron which had lost touch to close up. On its arrival he ventured as far as Gibraltar, and finding there certain assurance that Smith had gone home a month before, he dismissed the galleys and proceeded to Cadiz. Considering that Beaufort's orders were to make for the Straits with all speed and defeat Smith before he could escape, his cautious advance tells a plain tale. He and his officers knew their fleet too well. In fact, it was no fleet at all, but a mere mass of ships. Many of them

were not even men-of-war, but merchantmen purchased and hastily equipped. All were still so short of men that Beaufort had had to send emissaries to Algiers to redeem captives at any price, and in Cadiz he pressed every Frenchman he could find in a foreign ship. So lamentable was his manœuvring that when he turned into the bay some Genoese, who had availed themselves of his convoy, declared they were ashamed to see how the Frenchmen handled their sails, and that 'twenty English frigates would rout them all to pieces.'<sup>1</sup> This was doubtless too much to say; but it is probable that if Smith, reinforced with Sandwich's ships, had been permitted to hold his ground, Beaufort would not have attempted to pass the Straits until Du Quesne appeared to help him with the Atlantic squadron. It is certain that if single-handed he had made the attempt in face of so compact and formidable a squadron with so strong a man as Jeremy Smith at its head, his fleet, even if victorious, would have ceased to be a factor in the campaign capable of disturbing the English strategy in the Narrow Seas. As it was, with no enemy to oppose him, Beaufort got no further than Lisbon. Louis was nervous lest a division of the English main fleet might be detached against him, and after passing the Straits he received orders to put into the Tagus and remain there till Du Quesne could join him.<sup>2</sup>

A very serious aspect of the strategy which the English Admiralty adopted was the danger to which it exposed Tangier. Every one believed, in view of the nature of Beaufort's force, that Tangier was his real objective. Fortunately it was in a very favourable condition

<sup>1</sup> Consul Westcombe to Fanshaw, May 13-23, 1666, *Heathcote MSS.* 251.

<sup>2</sup> *Jal, Du Quesne*, i. 399 n. and 410.

for defence. A new Moorish conqueror had arisen who was pressing Guylan hard, and in alarm he reopened negotiations with the English Governor, which resulted in a firm peace. This done, Belasyse went home in one of Smith's frigates, leaving a certain Colonel Norwood in command. So satisfied was this officer with the strength of the place that, as Beaufort's great fleet approached, he was in no way disturbed. Indeed, the prospect of an attack seemed to him too good to be true. 'We are looking out sharply,' he wrote to Fanshaw, 'for Monsieur Beaufort with the French Armada to attack, as is given out in all ports. I am so charitable for that nation as to think their affairs are not managed by such weak counsels; for if they force us to set our wits to theirs we shall, to human understanding, use them no better than they were treated at Gigeri.'<sup>1</sup>

Norwood was right. The counsels of France were not so unsound. For all the thorn that Tangier was in Louis's side, he was not going to risk his fleet for it. In ordering Beaufort to Lisbon he had told him his first duty was to preserve his force, which, as he said, was necessary for an infinity of reasons, and, inactive as it was, it did its work. As Beaufort lay in the Tagus, forbidden to move, Monk and Rupert put to sea with a fleet of eighty sail, dynamically superior to anything the Dutch could bring against them. But no sooner had they reached the Downs than a message came from the King to say that the French fleet was approaching and that Rupert was to proceed to the Isle of Wight to meet it with one of the three squadrons. Thus was Monk's strategy entirely upset. It depended for success on throwing the whole weight of the British main fleet on one division of the allies. He had chosen it deliberately in preference to the

<sup>1</sup> *Heathcote MSS.* p. 250, May 9-19, 1666.

other possible plan of keeping the Toulon fleet within the Straits. Yet at the worst possible moment Stuart futility had forced upon him a plan that was neither one thing nor the other, and it immediately earned its reward.

The wind that carried Rupert to the westward brought out De Ruyter with eighty-five sail; Monk had but fifty-six; but, catching De Ruyter at a disadvantage, he made a brilliantly conceived attack, which, if Rupert had only been present in support, must have inflicted a serious, if not a fatal, blow to the Dutch. As it was, Monk could achieve nothing decisive. For two days he fought single-handed with all his old skill and confident impetuosity. On the third day Rupert, having found the alarm was false, managed to rejoin with part of his squadron; but, though the fight continued till the fourth day, the English were too heavily overweighted throughout for their superior tactics and discipline to tell, and the result of the King's faulty strategy or, as it more probably was, the Duke of York's, was a victory for the Dutch. Two months later, on St. James's day, the balance was redressed off the mouth of the Thames by an action which gave the English complete command of the sea and kept Beaufort ingloriously in Brest. Still the effect he had had on the war was never recovered. Charles's finances could not stand the strain of the prolonged struggle against the combined forces which threatened him, and peace negotiations were set on foot. They received the support of Louis, who had gained all he desired in seeing the two great sea powers cripple one another, and he was ready to begin his long-nursed attack on Spain. In May 1667 a peace congress assembled at Breda. Under cover of it, when things seemed to be going against them, the Dutch suddenly appeared in the Thames and carried out their famous exploit against the ships laid up at

Chatham. Peace immediately followed, but it was still at the expense of Holland, for it left England in full possession of the Dutch colonies in North America, and with the smart of a humiliation which she never forgot or forgave.

Her position, too, within the Straits remained unshaken. In vain Louis had clamoured again and again for twelve frigates which the Dutch had undertaken to send to join his galleys in the Mediterranean. In vain, too, had he urged them to combine with him in intercepting the fleet which in December 1666 was starting to supply Tangier. The Dutch were too much disgusted with the part he had played in the war to disturb their dispositions for an end which chiefly concerned French interests.<sup>1</sup> So Tangier remained unmolested, and had even been able to make itself felt offensively through privateers which Norwood induced the merchants to assist him in fitting out. Nor was it only by prizes that it was enriched. An increasing trade was also springing up with other Moorish ports, and, better still, as soon as Louis commenced his war with Spain by the invasion of the Spanish Netherlands, the French merchants, who could no longer reside in Andalusia, began to make the new port their headquarters, and a flourishing trade sprang up which seemed to promise that the dream of making Tangier the great emporium of the South might be realised before many years were passed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 412, 459, 469, 470.

<sup>2</sup> Norwood to Legge, June 15, 1657, *Dartmouth MSS.* p. 16.

## CHAPTER XXII

### TANGIER AS A NAVAL STATION

WITH the close of the Dutch war the English hold on the Mediterranean had survived the first great effort which France made to break it. The coalition with the Northern powers which Louis had arranged to isolate England fell to pieces, and was succeeded by the famous Triple Alliance which Sir William Temple negotiated between England, Holland, and Sweden, and the French King abandoned his attempt to deprive England of her commanding position at sea by force.

Four years' peace, the outcome of Temple's alliance, were in store for her, and during that time Tangier continued to flourish and give promise of all that was hoped from it. The internal dissensions of the Moors kept it free from serious molestation from that quarter, and the works went on quietly with an increasing trade. In 1668 it was thought safe to reduce the garrison to one regiment and half a troop, and in the following year it was given a civil municipal government, as though it were a permanent part of the empire. The same year Lord Middleton, the cavalier soldier of fortune, who had been Monk's chief opponent in his famous highland campaign, came out to replace Lord Belasyse, and quickly displayed his capacity for the post. He made the civil and military elements pull together, encouraged the growing trade, and further increased the strength of the defences. Above all, he devoted his attention to the completion of the

mole. As two of the three original contractors were dead, the Tangier Council took over the work, and it was thus placed directly under the Governor. In August 1668 Sandwich specially reported from Madrid that 380 yards were finished, and at the end of 1669 Cholmley, the engineer, said it had been making continual good progress for three years. During the storms of that winter, however, a serious breach was made. It was the first symptom of trouble, and the noise of it, as Cholmley wrote, 'filled all the gazettes of Europe.'<sup>1</sup> But if those who viewed the growing port with apprehension saw hope in the trouble, they were doomed to disappointment. It was found that by building the stones in massive wooden chests and then sinking them in their place, as had been done at Leghorn and Genoa, the difficulty could be overcome, and as soon as the system was adopted the work went on again merrily.

A noteworthy effect of the progress which the place was making is seen in the increasing importance which Louis was attaching to his Languedoc canal. The plans had been finally passed on January 1, 1665, and the works had been in progress over five years. The canal was to have a depth of twelve feet and a surface width of ten 'toises,' or about sixty-four feet, a capacity which Colbert hoped would be enough for the largest barks, and even for dismantled galleys. About the time when he had declared war against England he had pressed the engineer to revise the plans with the special view of making the canal passable for galleys. The engineer had apparently reported that it was not feasible, and the matter dropped, but not for long.

It was in the year 1669, after the Triple Alliance had forced upon France the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, that

<sup>1</sup> Davis, i. 96.

Colbert had set himself seriously to reconstruct the French navy. Following Mazarin's lead, Louis had succeeded in getting the Admiralty into his own hands by vesting it in his baby son. His ambassador in London was ordered to inquire diligently into the English naval administration and their system of naval warfare. On the analogy of his standing army regular marine companies were established to provide skilled crews for the royal ships; and on all sides the work of reform was earnestly undertaken as a preliminary that was absolutely necessary to French expansion. Among other matters the idea of making the canal of real strategical value was revived more emphatically than ever. 'In spite,' wrote Colbert to his engineer, 'of the reasons in your letter and report of three or four years ago, I persist in telling you that if we could make our maritime canal and the locks practicable for galleys there would be nothing so greatly advantageous for the King's service—seeing that if some day there is war in yonder seas and also in the Channel, the thirty galleys, which we could pass by the canal, to make war during June, July, August, and September might very likely decide all the actions.' He enclosed the dimensions of a galley, and told the engineer he was to examine the canal and the locks, and, if they were not capacious enough, to report how they could be enlarged. The harassed officer naturally made difficulties over the presumed elasticity of his works. Six weeks later Colbert wrote again somewhat more reasonably. 'You see,' said he, 'there could be nothing so great and considerable for the sea power of the King as the easy passage of his galleys from the Mediterranean to the ocean; but if it is impossible think no more about it.' In the spring of 1670, however, he was still harping on the idea, but apparently nothing could be done. Yet the correspondence remains to mark

the keen appreciation that Louis had of the weakness of his maritime position and of the mingled obsolete and advanced ideas with which he sought to remedy it. The idea that galleys could still redress the balance of sailing fleets marks an almost startling failure to grasp the new conditions of maritime warfare, while the project of securing interior lines by means of a ship canal anticipated the very latest expedients of naval strategy.<sup>1</sup>

The anxiety which Tangier and the condition of affairs of which it was the outward manifestation were causing in France was in marked contrast to the calm which the place itself was enjoying. This was in a great measure due to the fact that for the time it had ceased to be for the Mediterranean powers the most serious centre of interest. It was one of those rare moments when the intestine quarrels of Christendom were hushed, and the attention of its kings was called away to the greater struggle between East and West. At Lisbon Sandwich had completed Fanshaw's work, and concluded a treaty which finally recognised the new kingdom of Portugal and set free the British troops that had been engaged in defending it against Spain. At Aix-la-Chapelle, under the pressure of the Triple Alliance, a still more important peace had been signed, which ended the war between France and Spain; but at the same time, by vastly increasing Louis's power, marked him for the great and disturbing factor he was to become. The advantage which England gained by being able to pose as the peace-maker of Europe was the recognition by Spain of all her conquests and colonies in the West Indies and America. But though the pacification was due mainly to the menace of the Triple Alliance and the overwhelming naval power

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de Ricquet*; *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 110, and vol. iv. June 18, August 2, 1669, March 27, 1670 (o.s.)

at its command, it was directly brought about by the mediation of the new Pope, Clement IX. To him the dissensions of the powers were as heartrending as ever they were to his crusading forerunners. His eyes were fixed upon Crete, around which the Candiot war had been continually raging ever since Blake so nearly plunged into it, and where the Venetians with ebbing strength were still heroically holding back the Moslem flood. For five and twenty years Candia, like another Troy, had been the centre of the epic strife, pressed by an interminable siege, to which the adventurous spirits of all lands gathered to shed their blood and flesh their swords with all the fierce spirit of Godfrey de Bouillon and Richard. Still year by year the advantage ever grew to the Turks. All that the Papal navy and the Knights of Malta could do to support the exhausted Venetians availed but little. France, preoccupied at first with her intestine troubles, and then with her hunger for the inheritance of Spain, could spare still less to assist. As for England, who might have turned the scale had Cromwell done more than dream, she was disarmed by the maritime and commercial privileges she had wrung from the Barbary states. Holland, too, no less than England, France, and the minor Italian states, was more concerned with the advantage of the Turkish trade than with the Mussulman peril, and so the maritime forces of Christendom could never be brought at one.<sup>1</sup> But now, at last, when Candia was in extremity, and the old terror took a more glaring shape, Clement was able to arouse something of the lost mediæval spirit. It was in France, which in

<sup>1</sup> The English refused the Venetian request for assistance for fear 'we should have all our stock in Turkey forfeited.' See Arlington to Temple, Jan. 8, 1669 (*Arlington Letters*, i. p. 384). The Dutch, it appears, were ready to help if we would.

modern times had been the most backward of all the Mediterranean powers against the common enemy, that he found the readiest response. By the end of 1668 Louis had decided to come to the rescue with an expedition under the Duc de Beaufort himself; but, in order to avoid an open rupture with the Porte, it was to sail nominally under the Papal flag.

A really powerful force was prepared. Besides ten fire-ships and small craft, it included sixteen ships of war, and as many transports, with a large number of troops. With this fleet Beaufort appeared before the beleaguered town early in June 1669. The landing was successfully accomplished, and the Turks were being driven from point to point, when suddenly a deafening explosion hushed the sounds of battle. It came from a redoubt which the French seamen had just taken. There was an instant alarm that all the works were mined, and a panic ensued that bid fair to degenerate into a rout. To check it Beaufort immediately placed himself at the head of his best troops, flung himself on the advancing Turks, and was never seen again. It was a disaster that could not be retrieved. The French troops, instead of raising the siege, could barely hold their ground, and the mutual recriminations that ensued rapidly demoralised the Christian army. Thirteen galleys of France, with three fresh French regiments, arrived a few weeks later, and further reinforcements were preparing at Toulon. Louis was putting forth a strength which marked more clearly than ever his determination to take the place which in the days of Lepanto had belonged to Spain. But all to no purpose. One tremendous effort to dislodge the Turks by a bombardment from the whole of the assembled ships only ended in fresh disaster. The French troops re-embarked with a loss of 1,300 killed and 1,500 wounded,

and at the end of August the Venetians capitulated. So ended the famous Candiotte war in a fresh advance of the Mussulman power and another rebuff to Louis in his attempt to make himself felt in the Mediterranean.

What reward he looked to, had success attended the great effort, we cannot tell. Following as it did upon his other attempts to spread his power to the South, we seem to see him seeking in the Eastern half of the sea a means of redressing the balance that was against him in the West. Had he perhaps anticipated the vast idea of the *Consilium Ægyptiacum* which Leibnitz was about to present to him? Already the young German philosopher, eager to divert the ambition of Louis from European conquest, was preparing his famous treatise, in which, with a wealth of historical and geographical learning, and a convincing grasp of the economical and political conditions of his project, he was trying to tempt Louis to conquer Egypt. Seated there, he argued, where the Red Sea and Mediterranean met at the centre of the world, a Prince like Louis would be able to draw into his lap the wealth and power of the East which his Western rivals were fast absorbing, and would become the master not only of Europe but of Asia too. It is hardly possible the idea was not already in the air. It is certain, at any rate, that when the proposal of a then almost unknown scholar was placed before Louis in January 1672, he was sufficiently interested at once to send for the author to explain his design. Nothing further came of it. The influence of Louvois, Louis's minister of war, was in the ascendant to hold him to military adventure in Europe, and probably his unhappy experience at Candia taught him to take a view of the difficulties too grave for the learning and enthusiasm of Leibnitz to explain away.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres de Leibnitz* (ed. Foucher de Careil), vol. v.

The Turks at least appreciated to the full the significance of their victory. In the Mussulman world it produced a profound impression of returning strength, which was immediately displayed in renewed activity among the Barbary states. Fortunately England was once more in a position to curb them. Already, at the end of 1668, she had sufficiently recovered from the shock of the Dutch war to send a squadron into the Mediterranean. It was under Sir Thomas Allin, who, as Admiral of the White Squadron in 1666, had largely added to his reputation and had led the attack in the victorious 'St. James's' action. After demonstrating before Algiers and Salee with some effect he had gone home. But so soon as his back was turned their piracies grew as bad as ever, and in the summer of 1669 he returned with a still stronger squadron.<sup>1</sup> About the middle of August he appeared before Algiers with an advanced division of eight sail to present the English demands. He had been met with the news of Beaufort's death, and the retreat of the French to Toulon. The capitulation of Candia was already on foot and it was hardly likely that the Algerines would be inclined to submission. After some fruitless negotiation they flatly refused all satisfaction, and the first week in September Allin commenced hostilities. A day or two later he was joined by his second division, under Sir Edward Spragge, a cavalier officer, who, after serving in the Royalist army during the civil war, is believed, like Allin, to have followed Rupert on the high seas. During the late war he had risen to vice-flag rank in the main fleet, and had highly distinguished himself in the darkest hours by his bold defence of the Thames when the Dutch were trying to force their way up towards London. His

<sup>1</sup> His journal for this voyage is among the *Dartmouth MSS.*, and extracts of it are given in *Hist. MSS. Com.* XI. v. 17-19.

advent brought Allin's force up to eighteen sail, besides fire-ships. It was the normal strength of the British Mediterranean squadron and the normal operations followed. A blockade was established, while with his detached cruisers Allin soon established a mastery over the Algerine navy. He continued the work with success till September 1670, when he was succeeded by Spragge. Under a revised plan of operations the new chief was set free from convoy duty and was able to devote his whole squadron to the Algerine cruisers. Furthermore, arrangements had been made to provide him with a base of supply at Port Mahon, and acting from there he soon outdid his predecessor.<sup>1</sup> Prizes came fast, till in May 1671 the work culminated in a really important success. Having heard that a number of Algerine men-of-war were lying at Bougie, he proceeded thither with all the force he could collect. He immediately sent in a fire-ship, but it miscarried, and before he could prepare another the enemy, as usual, had time to protect themselves with a powerful boom. But Spragge would not own himself beaten. Undismayed, he tried again and quickly demonstrated what was possible to boats handled with skill and determination against these temporary defences. Under a heavy fire the boom was cut, his smallest frigate was sent in for a fire-ship, and so boldly was it pushed home that the entire Algerine squadron, consisting of seven vessels of from twenty-four to thirty guns, was completely destroyed. So exasperated were the corsairs that a Palace revolution followed at Algiers. The reigning Dey was put to death and his successor forced to make peace.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com., Various Collections*, ii. 140, 152, 156-7. It was not purely for strategic reasons that Port Mahon was chosen, but also to keep captains out of commercial ports, where they were tempted to carry merchants' treasure and so neglected their cruising. Allin was said to be an arch-offender.

It was not only in Algiers that the lesson was felt. In France, too, it was a bitter pill. She had been attempting to carry on a similar war against Tunis, but with little or no result, and the success of the English acutely emphasised the failure that seemed to dog every step she took upon the Mediterranean. The King, so Colbert wrote in referring to Spragge's exploit, was weary of hearing of English successes when his own men did nothing.<sup>1</sup> All the minister's efforts to give France a worthy position upon the sea seemed still to be of no avail. Of his own views on the situation in the Mediterranean, and of his idea of ameliorating it, we are permitted a curious glimpse, which reveals him bent on supplanting England at Tangier. In September following Spragge's success, Ralph Montagu, the British Ambassador to France, had an interview at Dunkirk with Estrades, to whom he was commissioned to deliver a letter from the English King. It was at the time when Charles was playing his extraordinary secret game with Louis, by which through an offensive and defensive alliance with France he hoped to make himself despotic at home, and abroad to punish the Dutch and have a share in the dismemberment of the Spanish empire. Estrades had not been taken into Louis's confidence, and was naturally jealous. Moreover, he had reason to believe that he had also lost the goodwill of the English King, which he had formerly enjoyed so intimately. He therefore determined to assert himself and recover his position by warning Montagu of the dangers in which Louis meant to entangle his unwary ally. Among other things he cautioned him that Charles must 'never hearken to the parting with Tangier.' He knew—so he said—Colbert's heart was set on it, and that to his knowledge there were some about

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 390, n.

the English Court who had engaged, when the time should serve, to persuade the King to part with it. So far from releasing the hold he had, on any pretence, Charles should insist, if ever he joined Louis in a war with Spain, on a promise that the French should seize Porto Longone in Elba, and hand it over to the English permanently. Then, said he, with Elba in his hands as well as Tangier, Charles would be as much master of the Mediterranean as he was of the Ocean.<sup>1</sup>

The seed appears to have fallen on good ground. At all events, Charles began to evince a sudden anxiety that in the plot he was hatching with Louis the Mediterranean should not be left entirely to his fellow conspirator. Under the new treaty operations were to begin with a joint declaration of war against the Dutch, and Charles in return for a French subsidy had undertaken to provide a fleet for co-operation with Louis's admirals in the Narrow Seas. Now, however, about a month after Estrades' curious confidences, when all was settled, Montagu was instructed to broach to Louis a proposal for a further subsidy to enable another British fleet to be fitted out for service in the Mediterranean. In pursuance of these orders Montagu did his best to persuade Louis that, in view of the fact that the Spaniards would most likely join the Dutch as soon as war was declared, there was no quarter in which the English fleet could be of so much assistance to him as within the Straits. Every argument, good and bad, that could be dragged into the service was used to win Louis's consent. But to see the English strong in the Mediterranean was no part of the French King's game, and he met the request with a profession of his absolute inability to furnish another livre.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Montagu to Arlington, Sept. 4, 1671, *Buccleuch MSS.* i. 500.

<sup>2</sup> Same to same, December 15, 16, and 24, *ibid.* 507-9.

Such then was the position of affairs in relation to the Mediterranean, when, without making any further concession to his fellow conspirator and dupe, Louis early in 1672 succeeded in thrusting Charles into a new war with the Dutch. Ill-advised as it was, there can be little doubt it was at first popular, and a real expression of the instinct of the nation. The great and rising mercantile community no less than the Court was still absorbed in the passion for commercial and imperial expansion, which is the dominant note of the Restoration. In spite of every effort to live at peace with them the Dutch had been showing by their behaviour that there was no room for them and the English side by side in any part of the world. If British commerce was to grow every one felt it must be rooted in domination of the Dutch.<sup>1</sup> Blinded by this pre-occupation, and burning for vengeance upon the burners of Chatham, public opinion welcomed the war with something like enthusiasm. But from the first there were far-sighted eyes that saw more acutely. Beneath Louis's cunning display of common interest they discerned a deep-laid plot to set by the ears the two powers who stood most formidably in the way of French ambitions. As the struggle proceeded this view quickly gained adherents. The behaviour of the French fleet throughout the war again did everything that was possible to foster the belief in Louis's ulterior motives. The Comte d'Estrées, in command of the main fleet, attended actions as though they were manœuvres he had been sent to study. However loyally later French historians have sought to palliate the disgraceful part the French seamen were directed to play, it is certain that at the time it made a chivalrous people smart with shame.<sup>2</sup> They seemed to see their

<sup>1</sup> Hertz, *English Public Opinion after the Restoration*, cap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Jal in his *Du Quesne*, and Capt. Chevalier in Vol. i. of *Histoire de la Marine Française* (1902), both defend the action of the French in this war

fleet on every occasion hold ingloriously aloof while their ally sapped her strength and enhanced her glory upon the common enemy.

It is only in this aspect that the war concerns us. Charles failed to shake Louis's refusal to assist him in fitting out a second fleet for the Straits, and consequently, during the two years the struggle lasted, it in no way affected the situation in the Mediterranean. Between them England and France were far too strong at sea for the Dutch to attempt anything serious to the southward. It is true that the refusal of the English proposal of a second fleet brought Colbert his nervous moments, when he was haunted by the spectre of De Ruyter detaching a squadron for a raid into the Mediterranean. At such times he would scold his officers who were destined to guard the Straits, and who would never get to sea, or, when they did, accomplished nothing. And so he would fall to mourning over the bad blood that prevailed among them, 'qui est,' as he sighed, 'l'esprit de l'ancienne marine.'<sup>1</sup> It was after the battle of Solebay in 1672 that he was most anxious, and there it was the action of the French fleet that had rendered a decisive victory impossible. The same prudent tactics were repeated the following year at the battle of the Texel, and so glaringly that the behaviour of the French was made a ground in the House of Commons for the refusing the supplies which the Government asked for the continuance of the war. 'The last fight,' said Sir John Monson, 'was as if the English and Dutch had been gladiators for the French spectators.' His speech brought up the Secretary of State in reply, and it is worthy of note that he

and the previous one, but it cannot be said that they make out an entirely convincing case against the strictures of Voltaire and the older historians.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 481, 483, 485, 495.

particularly urged the danger of losing Tangier if a fleet were not provided for the coming year.<sup>1</sup>

The growing importance of the place had already led to measures for providing it with a mobile defence of its own, and they are worth noting as the last attempt to reintroduce galleys into the British fleet. In a narrow strait, subject to calms and light airs, they had obvious advantages, and Henry Shere, a young engineer who afterwards superseded Cholmley, and about 1670 visited Leghorn and Genoa to study their methods of harbour work, says he first suggested their employment. 'My lord,' he wrote from Italy to some one in authority at home about this time, 'I remember to have discoursed to your excellency about galleys for the port of Tangier, and now advise your excellency that here hath lately arrived a French gentleman, by name Duteil, who is employed to the state of Genoa and the Grand Duke [of Tuscany] with ample credentials from his Majesty and his Royal Highness [the Duke of York], in order to the building and getting to sea of four or five galleys, two of which are already on the stocks in the arsenals of the aforesaid states. . . . I was glad of the news, very well assured that a couple of galleys being carefully employed would do the King good service in that part, but more than two would be burdensome and inconvenient.' He concludes by advising that an arsenal be immediately commenced at Tangier for their reception.<sup>2</sup> In August 1671 Cholmley had received orders to this effect, and sent home a plan of the port, showing how he proposed to berth the galleys and the modifications in the mole suggested for their

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Hist.* 593: 'Debate on refusing a supply, October 31, 1672.'

<sup>2</sup> Shere to —, *Tangier Papers*, R.O. 1670, bundle 13, undated, but he refers to his last letter, which was dated March 10, 1669-70. The mission of Sir John Baptist Duteil is mentioned in the summer of 1672, *Domestic Calendar*, July 25, p. 394.

protection.<sup>1</sup> During the war, however, the project seems to have hung fire. In the winter the work of making an inner harbour for them appears to have been commenced,<sup>2</sup> and early in 1672 there were several proposals made to the Government reviving the Elizabethan idea of sending prisoners convicted of small felonies to serve in the Tangier galleys.<sup>3</sup>

Two years elapsed, however, before the experiment could be tried, and then only one of the galleys, that from Leghorn, was ready. She was called the 'Margaret,' and the expense of arming her proved so great that, although the other was to be a present from Genoa to the King, her completion was left to stand over. The 'Margaret' was delivered at Tangier about the end of 1674, but during the two following seasons she appears to have done small, if any, service. Probably the type was too repugnant to the ideas of our seamen for her ever to have had much chance of proving a success. Rovers were a continual difficulty. The idea of condemning felons to the benches from home seems never to have been carried out, and efforts were made to man the oars with Barbary prisoners taken by the regular cruisers. The only result was that the galley fell further and further into discredit. In the summer of 1675 Duteil, who had been commanding her, was superseded by an English frigate captain, but all to no purpose, and in the following spring the 'Margaret' was discharged and returned to Leghorn. The Genoa galley was never even armed, and so the time-honoured craft disappeared from the British Navy List.<sup>4</sup> Contemporarily

<sup>1</sup> Cholmley to the Tangier Council, Aug. 14, 1671, *Tangier Papers*, bundle 14, where the original plan is preserved.

<sup>2</sup> See plan, date February 3, 1671-2, in Davis, p. 140, compared with Cholmley's original sketch in the *Tangier Papers*.

<sup>3</sup> *Domestic Calendar*, *passim*; *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, i. 402.

<sup>4</sup> *Derrick*, p. 89. Luke to Shere, September 16, 1674 (*Add. MSS.* 19872). Tanner, *Pepys Calendar* 1674-6, *passim*.

neously with their short and ineffective reappearance a new type of oared vessel, designed after a French model and much more to the seamen's taste, had been worked out, and two of these were now to take the place of the obsolete craft.<sup>1</sup>

'In the year '76,' says Pepys, 'Captain Wildshaw came from Toulon, and was telling his Majesty that there were building at Toulon several galley-frigates "to row with many oars," and thereupon, at the King's request, Sir Anthony Deane, the famous naval architect, wrote to procure particulars of them from an agent of his at Toulon. The answer being returned,' Pepys continues, 'A.D.'s son drew the draft of the "James" galley-frigate, and Mr. Pett the "Charles" upon the same principles, and from them came that improvement so useful to us against the Turks.'<sup>2</sup> The new vessels ranged from 450 to 500 tons, drew only twelve feet of water, and proved a great success. Shere called attention to their defect 'in not having some force of guns between decks,' and Pepys begged him to continue his observations on their usefulness, as the King proposed to lay down two more. Shere, who had recommended the galleys, was perhaps prejudiced against the new type, but their excellence is everywhere praised, and

<sup>1</sup> In 1683 George Byng, afterwards Lord Torrington, was appointed lieutenant of a 'half-galley' (*mezzo-galera*) attached to the Tangier garrison, but this was certainly one of the new type. *Memoirs of Lord Torrington* (Camden Soc. 1889), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Naval Minutes*, p. 269, quoted by J. R. Tanner in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xii. 699 n, 705. Wildshaw's suggestion must really have been made at the end of 1675. They were both in hand in February 1676, which accounts for the galleys being discharged at this time. Pett's vessel was launched by the Duke of York on September 12 the same year. On November 8 both were put into commission. Each was to have 80 'watermen' in her complement to row, and each was to have a special 'second boatswain' for 'the better exercising, instructing, and commanding the gangs of men appointed to the oars.' Tanner, *Pepys Calendar*, 2796, 3194, 3423, 3556, 3563-6, 3575, *et passim*.

they became the prototype of a class of light vessel, using sweeps, that remained in the navy till recent times.<sup>1</sup> They were permanently attached to the Tangier station, and, together with the smaller oared craft, such as ketches, barca-longas, and the new class of sloop now first appearing in the fleet, provided all that was wanted of free movement for the policing of the Straits.<sup>2</sup>

The attention that was being bestowed on the defence of Tangier is not surprising; for by this time it was beginning to have a real value as a port of refuge and a naval base. By the end of the year 1673 the mole was completed to a length of nearly 450 yards, and in 1675 Shere estimated that, if he were allowed to take over the works and carry them on upon the principles he had studied in Italy, he could finish the whole undertaking in a little over four years, and for less than a hundred thousand pounds.<sup>3</sup> A man of high scientific attainments, he was a convinced enthusiast for the place, and was to spend his best work and most strenuous years in making it what he knew it might be. It was about this time that he wrote a treatise on the tides, currents, and climate of the Mediterranean, and in the course of it his opinion

<sup>1</sup> Pepys to Shere, September 16, 1677 (*Add. MSS.* 19872), and *A Discourse touching Tangier* (dated October 1679), *Harleian Misc.* viii. 397.

<sup>2</sup> The word 'sloop' had become by this time familiar in the navy, the older 'shallop' and pinnace disappearing. In 1677 an officer of the 'Woolwich' in Narbrough's fleet speaks of the 'Boneta,' 'Emsworth,' and 'Woolwich' sloops (see log of the 'Woolwich' and 'Defiance,' 1672-8, *Harl. MSS.* 1910, f. 23), also of the 'Chatham' double sloop, and the 'Sprag' double sloop, a fire-ship (ff. 24, and under May 4, 1678). The 'Young Sprag' had been a sixth-rate, and in 1677 was made a fire-ship (Tanner, *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xii. 55 n). No more double sloops appear to have been built. They were probably superseded by the galley-frigates. On January 24, 1678, Narbrough writes of his intending to attack Algiers with his 'slops' and fire-ships, *Add. MSS.* 19872.

<sup>3</sup> The survey of 1673 certifies 437 yards finished, besides 40 of foundation (Davis, p. 140). For Shere's estimate see Pepys to him, October 9, 1675 (*Add. MSS.* 19872), in which Pepys points out an error in his figures.

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" of the place forces itself out. 'And here,' he exclaims, in mentioning Tangier, 'were it not a fitter subject for a treatise than a digression, I might say my opinion touching this noble port of Tangier, which in a word is a jewel fit only to adorn the crown that wears it, whose value I can better conceive than write, and humbly refer to a more worthy pen or to a truer and more impartial relater. Time for a few years, in despite of all the obloquy cast upon it by the enemies of his Majesty's honour and dominion abroad, will suffice to polish it to much perfection of use and public service both for peace and war, as would be very hard for a stranger to believe, and scarce fit for a modest pen to write.'<sup>1</sup>

✓ He certainly had some grounds for his enthusiasm, for, besides being able to give shelter to merchantmen during the war, it enabled war ships to use it as a station for watching the Straits. Had this not been so, the Dutch, who were in close alliance with Spain, and whose cruisers and convoys were using Cadiz as if it were a port of their own, would have had an insuperable advantage against our trade. The last action of the war well illustrates the situation. Peace was signed at Westminster on February 9, 1674. A week later Captain Passchier de Witte in the 'Shackerloo' of 28 guns, who was cruising off the Straits mouth, retired into Cadiz. An hour or so later he was followed in by Captain

<sup>1</sup> *A Discourse concerning the Mediterranean Sea and the Streights of Gibraltar*, by Sir Henry Shere, p. 20. It was first printed in 1703, just before Rooke took Gibraltar, and again just after in 1705. It was written, however, long before. On p. 30 Shere says he has been in Tangier four years. He left England for the place in May 1669. (See *Dict. Nat. Biog. sub voce* 'Sheeres.') Internal evidence shows that it was written while he was at home, and we know he was in England again in 1674 and 1675, just before he took over the work at Tangier. See letter addressed to him at Whitehall in September 1674, and Pepys to him in October 1675, *Add. MSS.* 19872. He sailed for Tangier at the end of May 1676. Tanner, *Pepys Calendar*, 2904, 2912, 2925.

Harman from Tangier with the 'Tiger' of 46 guns, who began to tell every one he had chased the Dutchman in. De Witte protested he had never even seen the English ship, but Harman continued to boast he had run from him. Admiral Cornelis Evertsen was in the port at the time careening, and was at length so much infuriated with the English captain's behaviour that he told De Witte that for the honour of the flag it was his duty to fight him. The Quixotic challenge was given and accepted. With such disparity of force the result could hardly be doubtful. In two hours, after an heroic duel at close quarters, the 'Shackerloo' was forced to strike with the loss of 50 killed and 70 wounded, including De Witte himself. Harman was also wounded, but the English loss was only 24 all told—an indication no less of the superior gunnery of the English than of the determined resistance of the Dutch.<sup>1</sup>

If Louis had hoped that the war would shake the English hold on the Straits he was disappointed. It had indeed rather the contrary effect. For it drove Mediterranean merchants, and French ones in particular, to use Tangier more than ever, and thus served to give the place a prosperity it had never enjoyed before. 'Tangier,' says a newsletter of the time, 'is likely to prove the richest port in those parts. During the war it has been the harbour for all European commodities and may long continue so.'<sup>2</sup> Still the inglorious policy which Louis had been pursuing at sea had left him the richer too, and in possession of a fleet with which he could seek compensation so soon as an occasion offered. He had not

<sup>1</sup> De Jonghe, *Nederlandsche Zeevezen*, III. i. 361.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Fleming MSS.* 112, and see Luke to Shere, September 1674, *Add. MSS.* 19872, f. 9.

long to wait. Within a few months after the peace was signed an opening presented itself, and by the end of the year France was once more launched upon a course which threatened to change the whole condition of Mediterranean power.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### LOUIS XIV. AND SICILY

THE significance of the new movement lay in the fact that the European situation had by this time definitely assumed the aspect which we associate with the age of Louis XIV. The Triple Alliance, which Temple had negotiated, had failed to check the career of France, as it was doomed to fail, seeing that contemporaneously with it Charles was arranging his secret understanding with the French King behind his Ambassador's back. By the astounding treaty of Dover, which he had concluded under the influence of his idolised sister, Henriette d'Orléans, he had practically placed his foreign policy in Louis's keeping. In return for aiding him to establish a Catholic despotism in England, Louis was to have a free hand and even assistance in his imperial and counter-Reformation policy. So secret was the incredible project kept that for generations afterwards historians were baffled in seeking a key to Charles's bewildering policy. By the nation it was felt rather than understood—felt like some ghostly terror which could not be defined or grappled, but still was there, haunting its rest and scaring its resistance into insensate panic. The first manifestation of the great design, as we have seen, was Charles's joining Louis in the late war upon Holland, and the first uneasy movement of the nation compelled him to desert his Catholic ally. The instinct of the people began to show them the war was a blow at Protestantism.

The old feeling rose paramount to all other considerations. The insult which the Dutch had put upon the country at Chatham was forgotten, the injuries in the East were atoned, and peace was the result.

Abroad the danger was no less keenly felt. Everywhere the unholy league was regarded as a new step towards the domination of France, and when Charles was forced to withdraw his support, Louis found himself faced with a new Triple Alliance. The French peril had galvanised into life the old Hapsburg system, but with new relations. For the Hapsburgs the preservation of Holland was now as vital as it had formerly been to France, and thus the new Triple Alliance was formed of Holland, Spain, and the Empire. With the domination of France taking the place of the old threat of the domination of Spain, the array of the nations had changed, but the strategical factors were the same. The vital points lay still in the old centres—the military in the Low Countries, the naval in the Mediterranean. As the first alliance had been mainly naval, so the new one was mainly military. The Low Countries were therefore the more absorbing factor, but the Mediterranean could not be for a moment forgotten. Here lay the main source of French wealth, and it was here, according to the side upon which the balance of sea power fell, lay the link or the barrier between the two Hapsburg powers. Here too was the channel by which England could strike into the heart of the strife with an overpowering hand. Never had its meaning to the power of the island realm been more patent. As the sides stood ranged, the chances were fairly balanced. It is true France was single-handed. But Louvois had completed his reorganisation of the army; Colbert had done no less for finance and the navy; and the policy which Louis had pursued

in the two Dutch wars, while it had shattered the sea power of Holland, had left France with a fleet intact and yet trained to war. The fate of Europe seemed to hang on the part which England would play. The country was for joining the alliance, the Court for joining France, and Louis knew that, in the excited state of popular opinion, all he could hope for was neutrality.

For him it had a double importance. On shore he could rely with confidence on the unprecedented army he now possessed. It was in the Mediterranean his chief anxiety lay, and England held its gate. Already he had ordered all his available vessels to concentrate from Brest and Toulon at the Straits, with the intention of barring the entry of the Dutch and, if possible, of crushing the Spanish sea power before she could unite with her new ally. The trouble was that he had no base from which his fleet could act against Cadiz, the naval centre of the maritime alliance; and the first step he took, when England broke away from his toils, was to endeavour to remedy the evil by one of his most characteristic moves. With the alert appreciation of public opinion in England, which he was to use thereafter with so much dexterity, he promptly withdrew his Catholic Ambassador and replaced him with a Huguenot nobleman, that the request he had to make might arouse as little suspicion as possible. It was the neutrality of England which the new Ambassador had to secure, and something more. His special instructions were to press for orders to the governors of all British ports that they were not only to admit French war ships, but to assist them with all they might require.<sup>1</sup>

From what followed it is clear enough which port it was that Louis had particularly in his mind. The focus

<sup>1</sup> Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 135.

of his naval action lay in the concentration of his Toulon and Brest squadrons at the Straits. The united fleet was to be under the Duc de Vivonne, who, as Captain-General of the Galleys of France, was then the highest naval officer in the service. For his flag-officers he was to have no less men than Valbelle and Du Quesne. The concentration was carried out with unusual precision in the early summer of 1674, and at the first trouble from bad weather the whole fleet came to anchor at Tangier. The advantage of Louis's action in London, where his Ambassador had obtained his request, was at once apparent. It was found that no Dutch squadron strong enough to force the Straits was expected for the present, and at Tangier, therefore, Vivonne could lie in security while he leisurely proceeded to work out a design for the destruction of his enemy's shipping in Cadiz.<sup>1</sup> As it happened, nothing came of it. For it was while Vivonne was thus preparing to act from Tangier that an event occurred which pointed to a much more profitable employment for the French fleet. All thought of Cadiz was given up, and the maritime war swung back into the time-honoured grooves from which it seems almost impossible for a struggle for the command of the Mediterranean to escape.

In Sicily, during the absence of the Spanish Viceroy, Messina had suddenly risen upon her Governor, and, having driven him from the city, the insurgents had sent to Vivonne an entreaty that he would come to their aid. The stirring summons reached him at a moment when his officers were doing their best to frighten him out of his projected attack on Cadiz, and he readily seized the occasion to abandon so thorny an enterprise and to return to Toulon for orders. The importance of the event cer-

<sup>1</sup> Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 133.

tainly justified his action. No more enticing opportunity could have occurred for redressing the defects of the French strategical position. Still in the memory of how France had burnt her fingers in the similar attempts of the Duke of Guise, and in view of the preoccupation of the southern French army with an invasion of Catalonia, Louis could not bring himself to take drastic action at once. Nevertheless, the situation was too full of enticing possibilities not to be kept open, and Valbelle was permitted to carry a small squadron with arms and stores for the relief of the besieged insurgents. No sooner was he arrived than they assaulted him with impassioned appeals for annexation to France. It was more than the admiral dare promise. He could only assure them vaguely of his master's protection. But, his mission accomplished, he hurried back to Toulon, convinced of the enormous importance of the opportunity, and determined to persuade the Government to his views.

The half-hearted intervention had already had a pronounced effect. In view of French operations in Catalonia, the bulk of the Spanish naval forces, including most of the Armada of the Ocean, was assembled within the Straits at Barcelona; but, on hearing of Louis's movement, the whole force had sailed for Messina, and it was only by taking advantage of a moment when the weather compelled it to leave the port open that Valbelle had been able to break out of the beleaguered port. He had thus had to leave the insurgent city closely pressed by sea and land, and if, therefore, anything effective was to be done, it must be done quickly. The strategical advantage already gained was obvious enough to harden Louis's heart for a more serious attempt to gain possession of the island. As a preliminary step Valbelle was allowed to return in December with fresh relief, and he carried with

him a distinguished French general as Commander-in-Chief for the insurgents, and a number of officers to organise their forces. By dexterous manœuvres he was again able to take advantage of unfavourable weather to run the blockade, and a fresh hold had been taken.

Meanwhile Louis had gone so far as to create M. de Vivonne Viceroy of Sicily, and had furnished him with a force which made the appointment something more than a threat. With Du Quesne as his second in command he arrived off Messina on February 1, 1675, and with the assistance of Valbelle's squadron succeeded in a sharp action in forcing the blockade and compelling the Spanish fleet to retire to Naples for repairs. Messina, which had at that time over a hundred thousand inhabitants, and had been on the point of succumbing to starvation, was saved, and the central point of the Mediterranean was effectively a French possession. Nor was this all. So completely was the Spanish fleet reduced to impotence for the time that the French squadrons were able to pass between Toulon and Messina without hindrance, and in the course of the spring Vivonne, who had taken the command ashore, had received sufficient reinforcements to enable him to assume the offensive and begin the conquest of the island by a move towards Palermo.

It was a situation which the sea powers were not likely to regard with indifference. About midsummer the elaborate preparations which the Spanish admiral was making in Naples began to have a new significance when it was known that Spain, under the terms of the Triple Alliance, had applied to the Dutch for assistance, and that De Ruyter himself was under orders to proceed to Sicily with a squadron of twenty sail. About England Louis was scarcely less nervous. In the autumn of 1674 Sir John Narbrough, a flag-officer who had made a considerable

reputation in the late war, had been appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, and was now maintaining an effective blockade of Tripoli in ominous proximity to the storm centre. In view of the condition of affairs in England it was impossible to tell how far or how long the chastisement of the corsairs would remain Narbrough's real object. Charles, who was cynically oscillating between dependence on Louis and a frank national policy, might any day come to terms with his warlike Parliament and fix their devotion by throwing in his lot with the allies; and since England during the past century had established a sinister reputation of always commencing hostilities without a declaration of war, Louis might find the balance in the Mediterranean turned against him at any moment. By the middle of September De Ruyter was in Cadiz concerting operations with the Spaniards and preparing for an effective junction with their squadron in Naples so soon as it should be ready for sea. Vivonne had failed in his offensive movement ashore, and Du Quesne, who was in Toulon trying to get to sea with a fresh fleet for his relief, was in imminent danger of never being able to reach Messina. The tension of the situation was acute; nor was it relieved till Louis found himself compelled to induce Charles to prorogue his aggressive Parliament with the promise of a pension of half a million a year.

At this cost Louis was able to reduce the balance to equality. But De Ruyter was already at Melazzo, where Vivonne's advance towards Palermo had been checked. Du Quesne was still in Toulon. The operations that ensued mark the definite establishment of France as a first-rate naval power. The bulk of the Spanish ships with which De Ruyter was to co-operate were in Palermo, not yet ready for sea. In Messina was a French squadron

of eight of the line and several frigates, under orders to endeavour to join hands with Du Quesne as soon as he appeared. This squadron De Ruyter immediately resolved to attack and destroy in detail before the Toulon squadron came on the field. Having seen Melazzo safe, therefore, he weighed to enter the straits without waiting for his Spanish colleague. As luck would have it, however, the wind went into the south-east, and he found it impossible to get in. For two days he stood off and on between the mouth of the Straits and the Lipari islands, waiting for a shift of weather. Seeing that De Ruyter's object was to prevent a junction between the two French squadrons, these islands were the key of the situation; for, lying as they did in the direct course from Toulon, they gave every opportunity for evasion to a squadron from that port seeking to get touch with Messina. On the third day he received intelligence that a French fleet had been sighted from Alicudi, the most westerly of the islands. The news pointed to an intention of Du Quesne to reach Messina by passing between Melazzo and Vulcano, the southernmost of the islands, and De Ruyter promptly occupied the channel. Here, on the fifth day, he was joined by the Spanish galleys that were lying at Melazzo, but a stiff south-wester came on, and they had to go back. De Ruyter held his ground. He was still hoping to get into the Straits, but towards evening he saw on the heights of Lipari the fiery signal that a fleet was in sight, and, as the wind still held at south-west, he resolved to deal with the new-comers first. Next day saw him among the islands, between Stromboli and Lipari, where he heard from fishermen that a fleet was in sight from Salina. Officers were quickly landed to climb the heights of that island, and towards evening they returned with the report that they had seen thirty sail

some six leagues to the north-west standing towards them. Steering northward all night, De Ruyter at break of day sighted the enemy some three leagues ahead and to leeward of him, standing west-north-west almost athwart his course. He immediately crowded all sail in general chase, and about noon, as the French continued to hug the wind in a determined effort to weather him, his ten leading ships were within range. But instead of holding on he suddenly hauled his wind, and, standing with the French out of gunshot, made the signal for line of battle.

To the French it seemed he was declining an action. Conduct so contrary to the usual impetuosity of the old fire-eating admiral has been misunderstood by others besides the astonished French. The highest modern authority has endeavoured to account for De Ruyter's action on the supposition that, finding himself in inferior force, he did decline the action, but with the deliberate intention of giving the enemy the wind, so as to compel him to attack to leeward, and that he thus inaugurated the defensive tactics which the French so long used with success against the British admirals of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

In face, however, of De Ruyter's own despatch, this view is not tenable. It is true his information led him to believe that Du Quesne's fleet was more numerous than his own, but it is clear he did not yet realise how much stronger it was. There was nothing to show that the bulk of the enemy were not store ships and transports, and his own galleys were now close at hand at Lipari. His movement was solely made in order to keep the wind and to allow his rearmost ships to get into battle order. So far, however, had they fallen to leeward that it was

<sup>1</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power on History*.

three o'clock before the line was formed. At seven it would be dark, and he saw that in those confined waters it was too late in the day to win a decisive victory. The action must be fought on the morrow, and, calling his captains aboard him, he exhorted them to fight to the death. Each officer grasped the old hero's hand and passed his word, and then all night long he hung upon the enemy with the galleys in company. The two fleets were sailing close-hauled on the same tack to the south-westward. Half-way between them De Ruyter had a galley to keep contact and signal him if the enemy attempted to elude him by a change of course. But as the night advanced the wind grew unsteady with ugly squalls. Later it increased to half a gale, and the contact scout with all the rest of the galleys had to run for Lipari for shelter. Now was Du Quesne's chance, and sure enough through the roar of the gale De Ruyter soon heard his signal to tack. He immediately did the same and the French move was parried. No man ever worked harder or better to keep the advantage of the wind. Du Quesne, under a press of sail, was using all his art to outmanœuvre his antagonist, but against the first master of his craft his efforts were useless. Chance at last gave him what he could not win. Towards dawn the wind again chopped round, and when day broke on December 27 De Ruyter saw the French fleet about four leagues from him and well to windward. The fickle weather had lost him the game, and, worse still, daylight showed him that the French fleet was composed mainly of war ships bigger than his own. Then, and not till then, he knew he was in serious inferiority both in numbers and force. Still the hard-bitten veteran would not give way, and, seeing the weather gage hopelessly gone, he bore up till he was in such a position that the enemy could not

reach Messina without fighting him, and there awaited Du Quesne's attack.<sup>1</sup>

What followed is described by De Ruyter in words that leave no doubt as to the intention of his tactics. 'At daybreak on the 8th,' he wrote in his official despatch, 'we saw them again edging past us, and, the wind being six points against us, they had the weather gage. So that, instead of our chasing them and their wishing to avoid an action, as we had supposed, they bore down on us about nine o'clock in the morning.'<sup>2</sup> The action was fought somewhere between Filicudi and Stromboli. For three hours or more it raged, as was admitted on all sides, with unexampled fury. A calm put a stop to it, and by the help of his galleys De Ruyter was able to withdraw his fleet from an enveloping movement which, in accordance with the latest tactical ideas, Du Quesne says he was about to make.<sup>3</sup>

Both sides claimed the victory. Neither sought to renew the action. The technical advantage was certainly

<sup>1</sup> See Brandt's *Michel de Ruiter*, and De Jonge's *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zeewezen*. Both authors used De Ruyter's despatch written on Jan. 9, 1676 (n.s.), the day after the action. Though Jal (*Du Quesne*, ii. 203) gives part of this despatch, he omits the earlier and more interesting portion, and somewhat mistranslates other parts. Captain Mahan, not having access to these two excellent Dutch works, or to the later French ones, was unfortunately induced in his great work to rely too much on the French 'official' naval history of Lapeyrouse, which a brother naval historian, himself by no means an impeccable scholar, has called 'une malheureuse compilation, due à un ex-officier de marine, M. Bonfils la Blénie ou Laperouse, sous le titre trompeur d'histoire de la marine; car il n'y a pas trace d'histoire sérieuse dans cet ouvrage dont le ministère de la marine, à défaut du public, s'est fait l'acquéreur, et dont il a empoisonné les bibliothèques des ports et bâtiments de l'état, pour enseigner aux marins sans doute le contrepied du bon sens et de la vérité' (Guérin, *Histoire Maritime de la France*, iii. 495). Of Guérin's work another French critic writes: 'Cette œuvre de seconde main est au milieu de nos bons livres d'histoires d'aujourd'hui ce qu'est le vulgaire oison dont parle Virgile au milieu des cygnes harmonieux.' See De la Roncière, i. 27, note (6).

<sup>2</sup> Jal, ii. 203.

<sup>3</sup> See *post*, p. 268.

with De Ruyter. With an inferior force he had held his ground, and prevented Du Quesne's getting through to Messina. On the following day he was joined by the Spanish admiral, and together they devoted themselves to trying to draw Du Quesne to the westward away from the Straits. He held, however, resolutely to Stromboli and refused to move till the Messina squadron slipped out and joined him. The allies were now in an inferiority of two to one, and, after again trying to induce Du Quesne to chase to the westward, De Ruyter decided to return to Melazzo. So long as he kept his fleet there intact within striking distance of Messina he knew Du Quesne dared not enter the straits for fear of exposing his rearguard to destruction. The move was a complete success. Du Quesne, even though he had succeeded in effecting the junction, was beaten. For all his superiority he had left the allied fleet in being, and was compelled to attempt the relief of Messina south-about. So hard pressed was the garrison, and so uncertain the wintry weather, that this in itself constituted a victory for the Dutch. The chances were that Du Quesne could not arrive in time to save Messina, and as soon as the French move was known De Ruyter retired into port to refit. The time for which his services had been engaged was expiring, and in pursuance of his original orders he prepared to go home, content that he had done for the Spaniards fully as much as their unreadiness deserved.

With the small force at his command he had certainly added new laurels to his great reputation. Still, after all, the lasting advantage was with the French. Against all expectation, lucky shifts of wind enabled Du Quesne to reach Messina in time to save the situation. Nor was this all, or nearly all. After years of blundering and pusillanimous failure the French navy came out of the

action with an established reputation. Not only had Du Quesne crossed swords with the most renowned seaman of his time and suffered no defeat, but by the generous admission of their opponents the French had handled their fleet with consummate skill and in admirable order.<sup>1</sup> It was clear to all men that Louis's navy had begun to be something that it had never been before. Thanks to Colbert's efforts and the cheap experience it had won by pretending to co-operate first with the Dutch and then with the English in the late wars, it had reached a degree of discipline and tactical efficiency little if anything inferior to that of its masters; and from the hard-fought battle off Stromboli dates the commencement of the time when France could feel real confidence in her naval forces.

Nor did the remainder of the war belie the first experience. Towards the end of February De Ruyter, having received at Leghorn despatches authorising him to continue the campaign, moved to Palermo, where he concerted with the Spaniards a combined attack on Messina by sea and land in hopes of destroying Du Quesne where he lay. The attempt took place at the end of March. De Ruyter succeeded in carrying the fleet into the Straits, but once before Messina he saw that the currents made an attack impossible. At the same time the Spanish troops were defeated in their assault, and the fleet went southward to Reggio, hoping to draw Du Quesne into the open.<sup>2</sup> The French did not refuse the challenge, and before long the two fleets met again off Augusta, a little town that lies between Syracuse and Ætna. The Spanish contingent, wholly inexperienced in the new

<sup>1</sup> See De Ruyter's despatch in *Jal*, ii. 203, and cf. Brandt and De Jonge, *ubi supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Brandt, *Michel de Ruiter*, book xviii.

tactics, proved themselves incapable of acting in unison with the smart manœuvres of the Dutch. Another indecisive action ensued, which was terminated by nightfall. Again the French more than held their own against the combined Dutch and Spanish fleet, and, to add to their sense of victory, the veteran De Ruyter, who from the first had felt he was going to his doom, was mortally wounded. Verschoen, his vice-admiral, had been killed at Stromboli, and De Haën, the original rear-admiral, succeeded to the command. He at once withdrew the allied fleet to Palermo. Here the exultant French a month later resolved to deal the allies a final blow. Vivonne himself took command, and De Haën, disgusted at the hopeless blundering and inefficiency of the Spanish captains with whom he was condemned to act, resolved to abide the attack at anchor. By skilful tactics, which added still further to their prestige, the French succeeded in concentrating their attack on a portion of the enemy's line, and by a timely use of their fire-ships to inflict so crushing a blow as practically to remove the hostile fleet from the board. Twelve ships were completely destroyed, many more disabled, and De Haën, with two of his flag officers, was killed.

Having thus within six months fought three successful actions against two of the great sea powers, the reputation of the French navy was firmly established, and their position in the Mediterranean secured. Du Quesne could safely retire to Toulon for stores and reinforcements, and in the middle of July was able to sail again with three thousand infantry to reinforce the French Viceroy. There was nothing to intercept him. In vain the Spaniards urged the Dutch to make one more effort. The admiral said he had instructions from home to go to Naples to await further orders, and Du Quesne and the rest of the

army that was following him passed unmolested. The fact was the Dutch were disgusted with the futility of their ally, and in August, when the second period for which they had promised to serve in the Mediterranean was expired, the fleet was recalled. France was at last in command of the sea, at liberty to throw in what force she chose to complete the reduction of Sicily. As things stood it was but a question of time. With a real army at his back Vivonne began to reach out towards Syracuse, and by the autumn Taormina, the romantic spot from which the Greeks two thousand years before had begun their Sicilian dominion, was in his possession. Single-handed it was hopeless for Spain to expect that she could prolong the situation indefinitely. By pursuing those evasive tactics in which, since the days of Drake, she had always shown so high a skill, she was still able to support her hard-pressed officers. Yet, unless something intervened to relieve the tension, it was inevitable that France would soon be in possession of the heart of the Mediterranean.

But already the heat of her success, both here and elsewhere, was drawing out of the North the cloud that was destined at last to chill and wither the system of the Grand Monarque. His evil genius had arisen. Since the murder of De Witt the monarchical constitution had been restored to the Netherlands, and William of Orange, as Stadtholder of the States, had become the focus of resistance to Louis. At present his prospects were dark enough. The land campaign in Flanders was going far from well; and on that side the relations between the Dutch and the Spaniards were growing as bad and mistrustful as they were in the Mediterranean. In his trouble William turned to Charles, and while Vivonne was in the act of again setting out for a grand attack on Syracuse, Bentinck, the Prince's most

confidential follower, came over to feel the ground for a match between the houses of Stuart and Orange. The attack on Syracuse proved abortive. Bentinck's mission was in every way a success. Vivonne's whole campaign fell to pieces, and while Louis was chafing at his Viceroy's failure, William was at Newmarket approving the attractions of Princess Mary, the eldest daughter of the Duke of York. At the same time, Sir John Narbrough, who had gone home after successfully completing his work at Tripoli, reappeared in the Mediterranean with a fresh fleet, and Louis began to take serious alarm, as well he might.

During the last inglorious years the British navy, the one factor in the situation which, if thrown into the scale against him, Louis could not hope to resist, had well maintained its prestige, and above all in the Mediterranean, where most it was to be feared. It was Narbrough, moreover, who had most brilliantly kept the old fire burning. The blockade of Tripoli, which he had established and maintained throughout the year 1675, had proved a complete success. A number of the corsairs' vessels were captured or destroyed by his cruisers and boats, and in January 1676 he had made a bold attempt on four vessels that lay in the harbour itself. The flotilla by which the attack was made was led by a young lieutenant named Cloudesley Shovell, afterwards the famous admiral, and without the loss of a man all four vessels were destroyed. Subsequently Narbrough landed a party and succeeded in burning a quantity of naval stores, but in spite of the lesson the Dey remained obdurate. He had still four powerful vessels at sea, but these Narbrough soon fell in with. Besides his own ship, the 'Hampshire,' he had only one frigate with him, but he did not hesitate to engage. A bloody action ensued, in

which, though he did not capture one of the enemy, he forced them to fly into Tripoli, cut to pieces, and with the loss of six hundred men. With his navy practically annihilated, the Dey at last came to reason. On March 5, 1676, a treaty was signed, conceding to England the maritime privileges she demanded, and agreeing to an indemnity of eighty thousand dollars. So abject a submission produced a revolution. The Dey was expelled from the city, and the new Government defied the admiral. Thereupon he once more stood in to threaten a bombardment, and the new Dey found himself compelled to ratify the objectionable treaty. Fresh from this success, Narbrough returned to Tangier, and his mere presence there was enough to coerce Salee into a treaty similar to that which he had exacted from Tripoli.

Louis himself was able to cut a scarcely more dignified figure than the corsairs. His protests that the English were practically protecting Dutch commerce against his privateers instead of assisting him to destroy it only resulted in his having to agree to a commercial treaty, whereby he gave up his belligerent rights and exempted British vessels from molestation by his cruisers, whether they were carrying enemy's goods or not.<sup>1</sup> But even this humiliating concession brought him little rest from his main anxiety. Though the ostensible object of Narbrough's return to the Mediterranean after his exploits at Tripoli was merely that some Algerine cruisers had captured one or two English merchantmen, the fleet he was to command was to consist of nearly thirty sail; 'but what is most extraordinary,' as a newsman wrote, 'is that the Duke of Monmouth goes to sea with this fleet in quality only of captain of the "Resolution," a ship of

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. No. 440, Sept. 7-17, 1676. Ranke, iv. 26.

between sixty and seventy guns.<sup>1</sup> Eventually the young Protestant hero did not sail, but the fact that he thought of doing so remains as evidence of the importance attached to the fleet in Court circles and the menace it contained for Louis.

A further point is not without significance and of high interest as showing the germ of an idea on which the British Mediterranean power came ultimately to be largely based. In the spring of 1675 Pepys had written to Narbrough instructing him to arrange a base to which reinforcements might be sent for a more vigorous prosecution of the war with Tripoli. Since Leghorn was too distant and too ill-disposed and Messina blockaded, the King and the Lords, he was told, considered Malta fittest for the purpose. Kephallonia had also been suggested, but the final decision was to be left to the admiral. Narbrough had no hesitation. He chose Malta, and seeing that he was operating against the nearest and most formidable enemy of the Knights, he had no difficulty in securing their permission. As soon as this was known at the Admiralty, the Tangier careening hulk and all the stores that were going out to Narbrough were ordered to Malta. In June 1675 Pepys, in submitting a memorandum of the Navy Estimates to Parliament, asked for a grant 'for the providing of stores to be lodged at Malta for answering the wants of the fleet under Sir John Narbrough,' and a month later a frigate sailed from Spithead to convoy the Tangier hulk to the new base.<sup>2</sup> The arrangement probably terminated with Narbrough's successful conclusion of the war, but as he expended his indemnity on the spot

<sup>1</sup> *Le Fleming MSS. (Hist. MSS. Com.)*, xii. vii. 129, 149.

<sup>2</sup> See *Pepys Calendar*, 1675; Pepys to Narbrough, April 19, May 10, June 14; same to the Speaker, June 19, July 6; same to Bett, July 6 (ordering the 'Europa' hulk from Tangier to Malta); and same to Narbrough, September 3.

in ransoming captives, amongst whom were several Knights of Malta, he was clearly in a position to prolong or renew his advantage as he pleased.

Besides the indication of the intended field of Narbrough's operations which these proceedings afforded, there lay in them a still higher menace. In view of the alarming growth of the French fleet, the House of Commons had passed a resolution to take into consideration the whole state of the navy, and called upon the Admiralty for a return. In presenting it, Pepys, to enforce his argument for an increase of strength, produced one of those comparative tables—now so familiar—which showed the French fleet actually superior to our own. 'Our neighbours' force,' said he, 'is now greater than ours, and they will still be building, so that we are as well to overtake them for the time past as to keep pace with them in the present building.' Not only had they passed us in numbers, but also in the individual power of their ships. In strength, staunchness, and general sea endurance, their recent construction had gone beyond us. He therefore urged the immediate laying down of a number of the larger rates; and recommended our 'building ships more burdensome, stronger, and giving them more breadth.' This would 'make them carry their guns better—that is higher—our great ships failing therein, especially in bad weather; 'enable them to carry more timber and thicker sides, less easily penetrated by shot'; give more stowage room, and fit them for the heavier guns that were coming into favour. In the end the House voted a large grant for the construction of thirty new ships, and though conditions were attached to it which Charles could not agree to, the programme was soon after taken in hand.<sup>1</sup>

It mattered little therefore that when, towards the

<sup>1</sup> Tanner, *Engl. Hist. Rev.* xii. 691 *et seq.*

end of 1677, Narbrough reappeared in the Straits, the misconduct of the Algerines afforded an excuse for his presence. Behind him was a strenuous naval revival, directed to a declared end, and he carried in his hand a threat there was no concealing. His arrival was followed by a report that Cornelis Evertsen was coming down to join him with eighteen sail, and Louis saw he must take rapid and decisive action.<sup>1</sup> Vivonne, since his late failures, had been showing as little heart as ability for his position, and it was now decided to allow him to return to his naval command at Toulon, and to replace him with one of the most accomplished soldiers in France. It was Marshal d'Aubusson, Duc de la Feuillade, on whom Louis's choice fell, and in the last months of 1677 an expedition was prepared for him, strong enough to carry French arms from end to end of Sicily. At the same time Charles, having decided to offer his mediation, was pressing Louis to make a reasonable peace with Spain. But, so far from listening, the French King continued to extend his operations in Flanders, and on New Year's Day, 1678, Charles and the Prince of Orange signed a treaty to unite their forces in compelling France to end the war. Clearly there was no time to lose; Feuillade had already left Paris, and was riding night and day down to Toulon to take up his command. By January 14, 1678, he was clear away to sea, and by the end of the month carried his fleet into the Straits of Messina. On February 3 he took the oath as Viceroy, and proceeded at once to strengthen the French advanced posts for immediate offensive action. For about a month his preparations continued, and when they were complete he invited the leading citizens to a banquet. In their enthusiasm they brought with them the sacred banner of Sta. Maria della Lettera, which had never been placed in a general's hands since, a century

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. No. 470, November 7-17, 1677.

before, it was given to Don John of Austria on the eve of Lepanto. For a power that was about to take the place which Spain had then held the honour was appropriate enough, and Feuillade accepted it complacently. After the ceremony he begged them to adjourn to the Senate House that he might publicly announce his master's orders. To the surprise of the citizens they heard that these orders were for every French soldier to be immediately withdrawn from Sicily. The King, so the Marshal said, required them for a secret expedition, and he hoped to be back in two months with still larger forces. The Messinians had no suspicion of the word of the general passed under their sacred banner, and Feuillade was allowed to proceed without interruption.

So the unhappy insurgents were left to their fate. It was this that had been intended by Feuillade's appointment. The decisive step which Louis had felt himself compelled to take was not the conquest of Sicily but its evacuation, and once more by a threat of action in the Mediterranean the Northern powers had laid a mastering hand upon the European situation. In France, so far from there being any hope of retaining a hold upon Sicily, the fear was that they would not even be permitted to abandon it. Narbrough was on the spot, and there was no telling what his orders were. 'We ought, I think,' wrote Du Quesne, 'to assume that, if the English declare themselves, it will be as they habitually do, by firing the shot at their own time, just as they did when they declared against the Dutch in 1672 by Holmes attacking the Smyrna convoy.' He might, as we know, have added many other instances, which gave to a British fleet ready for action in the Mediterranean its peculiar weight in the councils of Europe. The English, however, did not declare themselves. The threat was enough, and the French garrison returned direct to Toulon unmolested.

On his northern frontier Louis was not so easily checked. Though a peace congress was sitting at Nymwegen, to Englishmen it seemed that, if the Spanish Netherlands were to be saved, war was inevitable. The Duke of Monmouth went over to the Low Countries with an English force ready to co-operate with William of Orange. In July an engagement actually occurred between the opposing forces at Mons; and at sea conflicts between French and English vessels from time to time intensified the situation. Preparations, moreover, were being made in the British ports for fitting out a fleet of ninety sail. It was the last year of Pepys's able administration, and the navy had never been more ready for war. Eighty-three vessels were actually in commission, the magazines were packed with reserve stores, the ships in harbour were in excellent condition, and thirty new ones of the first three rates were upon the stocks.<sup>1</sup> Here lay the greatest anxiety for France; and throughout the summer, while the negotiations continued, Colbert had ever a nervous eye upon Narbrough's fleet, for fear of the spark which would set the seas in a blaze. In order to improve the French position at the Congress he was still bent on using the Toulon squadron either against Catalonia or the Dutch Smyrna convoy, but all Du Quesne's orders were strangled by the condition that at all hazards he must keep out of Narbrough's way.<sup>2</sup> With his hands thus tied Du Quesne could of course effect nothing to restore the balance in favour of the French arms. Louis was compelled to give way in every direction, and a general peace was concluded in September.

<sup>1</sup> Pepys, *Memoires touching the Royal Navy*.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. No. 494, May 3-13; 496, May 4-14; 498, May 18-28.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### TANGIER AND THE POPISH PLOT

LIKE the other treaties by which the powers had sought to curb the career of Louis, that of Nymwegen proved but a mere breathing place in his advance. Much as he had gained, it served only to whet his appetite and increase his confidence. With his army triumphant and unexhausted, his wealth increasing, and a navy that had just given signs of maturity, he was not likely to rest content, and least of all in the Mediterranean, where the promise was highest and the failure most marked. The pressure that had forced peace upon him had been irresistible, but in peace he knew how to work for his ends as well as in war. To oust the English from Tangier was still one of those ends.

How far his hand was in it we cannot tell, but it is certain that no sooner was the treaty of Nymwegen signed than a new and insidious form of attack upon the place began to make itself felt. There is no direct evidence that it was Louis's work; but, seeing what the condition of affairs was, it is impossible to believe that it had not at least his countenance. Since he had lost his hold on Charles, he had allied himself with the Anglican opposition. Indeed it was they who had forced him to make the peace, and it was still by secret influence in English political circles that he was trying to keep the British power out of his path. At the moment the situation was dominated by the notorious papist scare. The terror;

which had been haunting the popular imagination ever since the treaty of Dover was signed, had burst out into ungovernable fury against all papists; and Tangier at this time had Lord Inchiquin, son of the old Irish Catholic leader, for Governor. Now it will be remembered that Estrades had warned Montagu that there were men about the King ready to suggest the abandonment of Tangier so soon as an occasion served. It was such an occasion now. The Moors had recently become actively hostile again, and it was clear that sooner or later, if the place was to be kept, the reduced garrison would have to be brought up to its original strength. This meant increased expense and something worse. Tangier had already won itself an evil name with Protestants. Lord Inchiquin was not its first Catholic Governor: its garrison had always been largely Catholic, and it was openly branded by many as a nursery for papist troops. What better opportunity then could there be for suggesting that, instead of raising fresh troops to preserve the place, the double danger should be avoided by its evacuation?

Like most similar efforts to influence public opinion the origin of the movement is difficult to trace. Pepys believed on the highest authority that it was the Earl of Sunderland who first suggested the evacuation to the King.<sup>1</sup> He certainly had motive enough. His last diplomatic appointment had been to replace Montagu, who had been recalled in disgrace from the Embassy at Paris, and after the conclusion of the treaty at Nymwegen

<sup>1</sup> On Oct. 2, 1683, Lord Dartmouth, who was privy to the whole design, told him at Tangier that 'it was first proposed by my Lord Sunderland about three years ago' ('Tangier Diary' in Smith's *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys, Esq. F.R.S.* i. 380). This would place the origin of the movement in the autumn of 1680, but it was certainly in the air a year earlier.

he had returned to London to begin his unscrupulous political career as in effect prime minister of the 'Chits' administration. An arch opportunist from the first, he was aptly described in a lampoon of the time as

A Proteus, ever acting in disguise,  
A finished statesman, intricately wise;  
A second Machiavel, who soared above  
The little types of gratitude and love.

Having posed all his youth as a strenuous Protestant, he was now seeking his inspiration from Mademoiselle de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, or in other words from Barillon, the French Ambassador, and there is little reason to doubt the general correctness of Pepys's information. Indeed Sunderland himself afterwards admitted the idea was his own.<sup>1</sup>

The known facts of the case are these. After an existence of eighteen years, the Restoration Parliament had been dissolved. In the early spring of 1679 a general election had taken place, by no means so favourable to the Court as had been expected, and so soon as the new Parliament met, it fell savagely upon Lord Danby, the Old Cavalier minister whom they regarded as responsible for all that was evil in the King's policy, both at home and abroad. In the midst of the proceedings for his impeachment a rumour arose that the King was in treaty with Louis for the sale of Jamaica and Tangier for a sum of money which would enable him to dispense with the aid of Parliament. Whether any such idea was in the air or not, it seems clear that Barillon knew nothing of it. The opposition, however, took the matter very seriously, and worked themselves into such a state of nervousness that on April 7 they ordered a bill to be brought in for annexing Tangier to the Crown of England.

<sup>1</sup> Pepys to Lord Dartmouth, April 6, 1684, Smith, ii. 43.

Nobody in his senses—so Montagu assured the Ambassador—believed the rumour to be possible. Moreover the Court party was able to point out to the House how unwise was the bill; since if it were passed it would saddle Parliament with the burden of the garrison. But the country members were far too excited to listen. The bill was brought in, and committed to the most violent of the opposition to draft; but even then they could not rest. The King might deal with Tangier, as he had dealt with Dunkirk, before the bill could pass, and so high was the feeling that, three days later, immediately after their refusal to accept the Lords' milder proposals about Danby, the Commons passed a resolution, *nemine contradicente*: 'That this House is of opinion that those who shall advise his Majesty to part with Tangier to any foreign prince or state, and be instrumental therein, ought to be accounted enemies of the King and kingdom.'<sup>1</sup>

Though the meaning of these proceedings is clear enough, it is uncertain from what quarter came the note of alarm. Barillon affirmed that it was believed to have originated from Danby himself; but it is much more probable that Montagu was at the bottom of it. He had been deprived not only of his embassy, but also of his seat in the Council, and was bent on revenge. Danby, by warmly supporting the Orange match, had incurred Louis's enmity, and Montagu, in return for a substantial gratuity, had offered to bring about the obnoxious minister's fall. It was in this way the attack of the Commons had begun. Montagu's unscrupulous method of proceeding was to make the unpopular statesman appear responsible for Charles's degrading bargains with the French King, which Danby had done his best to neutralise, and of

<sup>1</sup> *Commons Journals*, ix. 588. Barillon to Louis, April 17 and 26 (n.s.), 1679, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 40.

which Montagu himself had been the instrument. With this end in view, nothing could tell more sharply against his victim than a hint that Tangier was in the unsavoury market. Such a suggestion, moreover, had a further advantage for Montagu. To take foreign pay in those days by no means meant that a man had lost his patriotism. Montagu could earn his money without betraying his country, and nothing could serve his purpose better, both for calming his conscience and turning suspicion of French influence from himself, than warning the opposition of what he had heard from Estrades. Thus protected he would be able to attack Danby with all the virulence he pleased; and at this time he had been so successful in his game that the House had taken him under its special protection and impounded his papers to prevent the Court getting hold of them. It is extremely probable therefore that we may trace the action of the Commons to Montagu. In any case they were so far in earnest that the bill was read a first time some six weeks later, and had not the King suddenly prorogued Parliament in order to save Danby from its animosity, the Tangier bill would certainly have become law.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is most probable that it was by Louis's own pensioner that the movement against Tangier, if there was one, was checked. But Sunderland remained at the head of affairs, and the nervousness continued. A similar rumour recurred early the following year. This time it took the form that, if Parliament would not vote enough money for the fleet, the Dutch were ready to lend it on the security of Tangier. As the place had not been formally annexed, it was argued that it was in the King's power to deal with it, and that in the hands of the Prince of

<sup>1</sup> *Commons Journals*, ix. 625, May 20, 1679. A copy of the bill is calendared in *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 320.

Orange, who was to command the garrison, it would be as useful to England as if it were in English hands. It was a suggestion—so Barillon wrote to his master—of the Dutch party at Court, who were urging an alliance with Holland instead of with France; but he found comfort in the alarm it aroused, not only with the Parliamentary opposition but with the great mercantile community.<sup>1</sup>

The feeling that prevailed is further reflected in the activity of the pamphleteers. In the autumn was published *The Present Danger of Tangier; or an account of its being attempted by a great army of Moors by land and under apprehensions of the French at sea*. It purports to be a letter written from Cadiz on board the 'Hopewell,' but is clearly a political tract. After referring to the popish plot and the religious troubles in Scotland, the anonymous author describes Tangier and the army of fifteen thousand Moors which he alleges is encamped against it. He fears that unless quickly succoured it will be lost, and if, he says, it should fall into some people's hands it would cause the loss of all our Mediterranean trade. Besides the danger from the Moors, he affirms that the French have forty sail of galleys threatening it from Gibraltar, and throughout he is clearly writing to create a public feeling for strengthening the place instead of giving it up.<sup>2</sup>

The manuscript of a similar tract, apparently of this time, exists in the Pepys collection, which dwells particularly on the strategic importance of the place. 'Tangier,' it argues, 'being a most convenient station for our naval forces, which may give law to all that sail upon the Midland sea, when once our mole is finished, as also a

<sup>1</sup> Barillon to the King, Feb. 12 and 26, 1680, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 41.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, pp. 130-1.

safe port for vessels of trade.' The author sharply censures those who call it a useless expense, since already, he urges, it has forced the French King to make his Languedoc channel, make spacious harbours, and keep a large naval force on foot, to wit, thirty galleys at Marseilles with eight or nine thousand men always aboard them. In peace and war, he says, it has supplied merchantmen and ships of war with victuals and intelligence. So formidable a threat, moreover, was it to commerce that it inclined foreign princes to peace, since about the Straits they could now discover almost no sail but what bore St. George's Cross. The ugly reputation which the garrison had acquired for insubordination and lewd living he was obliged to admit, but this, he contended, was no essential evil, due to the climate, but to be attributed rather to want of business and action. It was caused by idle hands 'enjoying their neighbours' troubles, and delighting in scandalous reports, especially'—so he adds—'the women, whose tongues are not to be limited.'<sup>1</sup>

A still more important tract was issued the following year, 1680, which with considerable power and at length sets forth the advantages that had been already reaped from the occupation. To begin with, the author points out how at the very commencement it compelled the King of Spain to draw his forces from the Portuguese frontier down into Andalusia, and so at the most critical period of their struggle for independence it gave the Portuguese respite for a whole campaign. <sup>①</sup> 'Tangier,' he proceeds, 'is so advantageously situated that it surveys the greatest thoroughfare of commerce in the world . . . so that no ship or vessel can pass in or out of the Mediterranean unobserved from thence.' <sup>②</sup> . . . Here it was that a

<sup>1</sup> *Bolland's Mediterranean Papers*, No. 15, in the Pepysian Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

squadron of the Dutch, on two several occasions during that war, lay in wait for our Newfoundland fleet, who had no recourse for safety but to Tangier, where they were protected and secured till the danger was over.' He then goes on to speak of how Allin and Narbrough had won all their gréatest successes by being able to hold this station, and had thereby destroyed the pirates' power. Already it was a real port of refuge and naval base. 'With what ease and expedition,' he says, 'did Sir John Narbrough, the last year, careen and refit the ships under his command within the mole. I have often heard him say with great satisfaction that he would undertake to refit a squadron [there] in half the time and with half the charge that it could be done anywhere else out of England.' He then dwells upon its high strategical advantage in case of war with France or Spain, both for the protection of our commerce and the power of offence against theirs. In the case of the Dutch wars its value was particularly conspicuous. For in the first war, when it was in its infancy, 'the mole of little benefit, nor the ministers then not so much enlightened in its usefulness, 'the Hollanders did with a small squadron of ships scour the whole Mediterranean,' whereas in the last war they themselves were barely able to trade within the Straits at all. Finally, it had proved itself, if rightly managed, capable of being an absolute prevention to the Barbary corsairs.

'If,' he proceeds, 'Tangier be a jewel of so many extraordinary virtues, it were a great deal of pity it should adorn any prince's crown but he who wears it.' So he speaks of an alarming rumour that the place was to be sold to the French, and urges the terrible danger to our position and prestige if it were not only lost to us, but gained by them. He warns men against complaining of

its expense, and reminds them how just the same was said of Dunkirk and how they have repented the sale. It is no more expense, he argues, than one first-rate ship in war. 'Yet,' he asks, 'did ever anybody complain that our ships were a burden?'

In conclusion he dwells on the commercial importance to which its position seems to entitle it over and above its strategical advantages. He foresees it may become the great emporium of the American, East Indian, and Levant trade—the main centre of distribution for all Europe, if only it be kept a free port. 'It is an easy matter therefore,' he concludes, 'for the Prince of Tangier to command our northern world, and to give laws to Europe and Africa. The situation of Rome, of Carthage, of Constantinople, of London, Paris, and other imperial cities is nothing near so advantageous for that purpose as Tangier if all things be considered.'

It is clear therefore that by this time its true value was fully appreciated, and the attempt to bring it to the fate of Dunkirk failed. Still no help for its adequate maintenance was to be had from the House of Commons. A new Parliament met in October 1679; but the King, in face of the movement for the exclusion of his Catholic brother from the succession, dared not let it sit, and it was continually prorogued. Still, in spite of his penury, he contrived to send out reinforcements. In the course of the year 1680 the garrison was brought up to two battalions: and the help came none too soon. Towards the end of the previous year the pressure from the Moors began to increase to a dangerous degree. All work on the mole had to be stopped, and the money allotted for it hastily

<sup>1</sup> 'A Discourse touching Tangier,' in a letter to a person of quality, to which is added 'The Interest of Tangier,' by another hand (*Harleian Miscellany*, ed. 1810, vol. viii. 391 *et seq.*). The Discourse is dated Oct. 20, 1679.

spent on the fortifications. By the end of March 1680 the Moors had sat down before the new works in force, and formed a regular siege. Sir Palmes Fairborne, who as deputy governor was commanding in Lord Inchiquin's absence, at once recognised that he had to confront a situation such as had never yet threatened the place. In the great school of arms which had formed round the siege of Candia there were numbers of Mussulman soldiers who had gradually acquired a high degree of skill in the European methods of siege work. When the capitulation put an end to their employment, it was natural for the more adventurous of them to seek further service with Muley Ishmael, the rising star that had supplanted Guylan in Morocco. At Tangier then it was no longer a question of untutored warfare and ill-directed assaults as in the earlier days, but of a formal siege with all the order of trench and mine that modern science could suggest.

Fortunately, Fairborne was just the man that was wanted. He too had served his apprenticeship to arms in the Candiot school under the Venetian colours, and had been an officer in the Tangier regiment from its formation in 1661. No one knew the possibilities of the place better than he; he was a soldier born and bred, with a high reputation both for courage and conduct, and Tangier had never been so well ordered as during the years he had been acting governor. The chance had come to show his mettle, and at every turn the utmost skill of the Moors in devising approaches was promptly met and foiled with equal art. The fleet too was doing its best to support him. It was now under the command of Arthur Herbert, afterwards famous as Lord Torrington, an officer of quite the modern type. Having joined the service in 1663 at the age of sixteen, he had been on active service almost ever since. In both Dutch wars he commanded a ship, and had

served in the Mediterranean in almost every squadron that had gone there. He had had a ship under Allin, Spragge, and Narbrough. In Narbrough's last and most important fleet he held the rank of Vice-Admiral, and when in May 1679 Narbrough went home he remained in command of the station. A year later he received his commission as Admiral and Commander-in-Chief. Surrounded by a devoted band of captains, and thoroughly familiar with his work, he was able to render material assistance to the Governor. Tangier was in his eyes, as in Narbrough's, an invaluable naval station. He regarded it as his headquarters, and in the modern fashion had a house in the town.<sup>1</sup> Fairborne could not have wished for a better colleague or one who had the preservation of the place more earnestly at heart. But none knew better than he that all modern experience showed how the defence of fortified places must ultimately be beaten by a regular attack. Under the conditions that existed, and against the great odds to which it was exposed, the place could not hold out indefinitely. Bit by bit the Moors were eating their way in. By the first week in April they had isolated two of the outer forts. For more than a month both of them held out; but, on May 12, one had to surrender while the other was cleverly evacuated, and Fairborne was able to secure a truce of four months.

But he was too good a soldier not to see his fate before him, unless Charles was ready to put forth a strength to which he was probably unequal. To Pepys, the secretary of the Tangier Council, he wrote a private letter in which he laid bare his thoughts, and clearly sounded the last

<sup>1</sup> Smith, i. 401. Pepys censures him for this, and generally gives him a bad character. But Pepys was so devoted an adherent of his patrons that we can attach no more importance to his dislike of Herbert than we can to his dislike of Monk. Admiration for Lord Dartmouth was at the bottom of the one, for Lord Sandwich of the other.

note. 'I only desire,' he wrote in sending home a report of the situation, 'that you possess yourself with the opinion that it will be impossible ever to maintain this garrison by any other ways but by open war, unless the enemy would condescend in time of peace to [our] fortifying the town, which, so far as I can learn, they absolutely refuse, but upon consideration of powder are willing [for us] to carry on the work for the mole; by which you may conclude that the enemy do only defer their attempt against the town till the mole be made more convenient for them. Therefore it will be more for the King and kingdom's service (I say, if his Majesty cannot maintain it with such a force that we may be able to beat them in the field) to blow up both town and mole. This I have endeavoured to digest amongst my friends as most proper, and what I foresee must be the end.'<sup>1</sup>

But Charles could not so easily bring himself to lose the most glittering jewel he had added to the British crown. It was all that remained of the brilliant hope and high purpose with which he had begun his reign. Struggling as he was with the influences that were dragging him down, he still clung to it with a last effort of his better self. With Tangier would go his last claim to be considered a great power in Europe. Nor was he without support. In the ministry was Sir William Temple to counteract Sunderland's influence, and in him he had at his elbow an adviser who had perhaps the clearest view of any man of his time how the prestige of the country could best be preserved.

The newsletters of the time clearly reflect the anxiety that prevailed. 'All fear,' says one of them on June 12, 'that Tangiers will fall,' and again on July 31, 'There

<sup>1</sup> *Hodgkin MSS. (Hist. MSS. Com.)*, p. 176, May 24, 1680.

are hopes we can still hold Tangiers.'<sup>1</sup> The Government had, in fact, determined to make a serious effort to save it. The Court—so Barillon kept informing Louis—was wholly absorbed in the affair. The merchants regarded the preservation of the place as essential to the safety of the Levant trade, and, in spite of the danger of letting seasoned troops leave the country at so critical a political juncture, something had to be done. True, as he says, there were courtiers who began to whisper that Tangier was of no use and had better be abandoned. 'I believe,' wrote the Ambassador, 'if they did not fear what would happen when Parliament met, they would make up their minds to abandon Tangier after destroying the works that are in progress on the mole.'<sup>2</sup> For the time, at any rate, public opinion and Charles's remnants of ambition were too strong for such counsels to be listened to. Thirteen companies of infantry, including five of the Coldstream Guards, were to be ready to go out in June, and more were to follow, and Spain was persuaded to provide two hundred horse. To complete the testimony of energy, Lord Ossory, the Duke of Ormonde's idolised son and the Bayard of the English Court, was induced to accept the governorship. The most brilliant of the golden youth eagerly volunteered to accompany him. At sea, on land, and in diplomacy he had won equal distinction, and, if Tangier could be saved, every one knew he was the man to do it. Adored by the seamen no less than the soldiers, and the darling of society as well, he gave to the King's resolution a distinction which left nothing to be desired. But a cloud had settled over Charles's star that not even his brilliance could dispel. Ossory himself received the

<sup>1</sup> *Le Fleming MSS.* pp. 168, 170.

<sup>2</sup> Barillon to the King, July 31, 1680 (n.s.) Also his despatches from May 9 to August 24, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 41.

appointment as his doom, and saw open before him the grave of his reputation. As he told Evelyn, he was being thrown away, not only on a hazardous venture, but on one that in most men's minds was an impossibility. Yet he prepared himself to obey, sinking every day into a gloomier foreboding, till, before he could sail, death came mercifully to his release. With him died the newly kindled enthusiasm. No one was appointed to succeed him. The King wearily abandoned his effort. The Coldstreams and the other old troops were countermanded, and it was decided to send a small relief of fresh levies, and leave the rest to Parliament when it met.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the truce at Tangier was fast ebbing away. As no new governor had been appointed, the command remained in the capable hands of Sir Palmes Fairborne. The truce expired on September 15, and the Moors immediately reopened hostilities; but Fairborne, having received some reinforcements and being backed by Herbert's fleet, had everything in order. He at once assumed the offensive, and, having now a sufficiency of cavalry, was able to do so with success. During the following months, by a series of skilfully designed operations boldly carried out, he succeeded in reoccupying all the positions he had been forced to abandon by the terms of the truce, and firmly built out a position from which he meant to strike the Moors a final blow in the field. During all these operations he superintended the work in person, exposing himself on horseback in complete contempt of the enemy, till on October 24, in directing a far advanced work that practically completed his scheme, he was seriously wounded. The Moors seized the occasion for a strenuous effort to recover the ground they had lost, and during the following days redoubled their

<sup>1</sup> Barillon to Louis, Aug. 24, 1680 (n.s.), *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 41

efforts in the trenches with alarming insistence. But Fairborne equally saw his hour had come, and determined on a sally of the whole garrison in force. On the 27th all was ready. Herbert organised an important diversion with his boats to threaten the enemy's flank on the opposite side of the bay, besides taking command of a battalion of seamen in the main attack of the troops. Fairborne, whose wound had taken a dangerous turn, was unable to sit his horse; but, though he was compelled to resign his place to Colonel Sackville, his second in command, he had himself carried to a chair on his veranda, whence he could survey the whole field of operations.

The movement began with a feint by the Spanish horse to the westward against the enemy's left, supported by the workmen engaged on the mole, who had been furnished with drums and colours to give them the appearance of infantry. At the same time the boats of the fleet developed their demonstration to the eastward against the enemy's right, and succeeded in holding a large force of Moors in that direction throughout the day. The real attack was made from the centre with five battalions of infantry, the naval brigade, and the three troops of British horse. With splendid dash the men flung themselves on the advanced trenches of the Moors, where a stubborn fight at push of pike took place, till one by one they were carried and the Moors pressed back to their original lines. But Sackville was not yet content: he had only just begun. There was no pause except for filling up the trenches to make a passage for the horse. This done, the advance was renewed, and all the horse, including the Spanish who had now joined the main attack, passed over. The resistance of the Moors was fiercer than ever, especially from their cavalry, who charged again and again to protect the beaten infantry. But all

was of no avail. As the Moors were dislodged from the trenches, Sackville's cavalry kept dashing into them and cutting them to pieces until a complete rout declared itself. The British infantry and seamen rushed the enemy's camp, killing the Moors, who all refused quarter, among the tents, while the cavalry pursued them with great execution a mile or more into the open country. The victory was complete; Fairborne's methods had proved irresistible, and it was the crown of his life. All day long, as he had watched the resistless advance, he had been slowly sinking; and when the exultant troops were returning with shouts of triumph to their quarters, he passed away. So died a fine soldier and a worthy pioneer of British Mediterranean power. He had passed all his best years, as he said in his last words, 'doing my endeavour for the advancing of my King and master's interest, to withstand the Moors' attempts and gain myself reputation.' He was honoured, as he richly deserved, with a monument in Westminster Abbey, and Dryden wrote the epitaph. It refers to his early service at Candia and tells how—

His youth and age, his life and death, combine,  
As in some great and regular design,  
All of a piece throughout and all divine.  
Still nearer heaven his virtue shone more bright,  
Like rising flames expanding in their height;  
The martyr's glory crowned the soldier's fight.

He had saved Tangier, and not only that. For so hard were the Moors hit that they made advances for a cessation of arms, and Sackville was able to exact from them, on his own terms, a truce for six months. The position was still further secured by the arrival of the new reliefs. They took the form of Colonel Percy Kirke with his newly raised Second Tangier Regiment, destined to be famous as the 'King's Own,' and notorious in

Monmouth's rebellion as 'Kirke's Lambs.' Still Sackville did not conceal the fact that the inherent defects of the situation, on which Fairborne had insisted, were still unchanged. He reported home that things could not continue as they were. A much wider line of defence must be secured in order to take in the positions which commanded the place if it was to be rendered permanently tenable, and 'unless,' said he, 'the King can send ten thousand foot and eight hundred or a thousand horse, it is impossible ever to possess that ground, which must be had before these fortifications can be made according to the draft sent his Majesty.'<sup>1</sup> The estimate for completing the necessary works was 300,000*l.* a year for ten years, an outlay which he feared was too large for his Majesty's undertaking.

Meanwhile the only hope of securing the place was to convert the truce into a lasting peace. For this purpose Sir James Leslie had come out as ambassador. It was characteristic, however, of Charles's administration that when he sailed his presents had not been forthcoming, and he dared not go to Fez without them. The Emperor consequently began to take an ugly tone. From a potentate whose favourite pastime was believed to be the invention and trial of new tortures, and whose frenzies of self-importance were as ungovernable as his cruelty, anything might be expected, and it was necessary to keep him quiet at all costs. It was Colonel Kirke who stepped into the breach and boldly undertook a mission to the Moorish capital. The effect was remarkable. There was something in the Colonel's fierce and reckless personality which hit the tyrant's fancy. He treated Kirke with marked affection,

<sup>1</sup> A sketch of the proposed works by Beckman, who by this time had been received into the British service, is among a number of water-colour sketches of Tangier, all from his hand, in *Add. MSS.* 33233.

consented for his sake to receive the dilatory ambassador, and finally vowed that so long as Kirke remained in Tangier there should never be a gun fired at the place, but that it should be furnished with provisions and enjoy the benefits of a hearty peace. Thus all difficulties were removed and Leslie was able to conclude a peace for four years on the sole condition that no new fortifications should be erected.

The retention of the English hold on the Mediterranean now depended on whether the King could come to terms with his new Parliament. In no other way could he hope to get the funds necessary for Tangier. Louis, fully alive to the situation, was again straining every resource to prevent an accommodation, and so far French influence had been successful. For a whole year after the general election successive prorogations had prevented any business being done; but at last, in October 1680, about a month before Sackville's victory, Parliament had been allowed to meet, and in his opening speech the King had particularly requested the Commons to help him in preserving Tangier. But the scare of the popish plot had not yet burnt itself out, and the new Parliament at once showed itself absorbed with the exclusion of the Duke of York. When the news of the battle arrived Charles ventured to send them a message reminding them of his desire. The message was duly considered, but it resulted only in a resolution to present the King with an address on the dangerous state of the kingdom. In this address they recalled to the King that Tangier had had several popish governors, that one of them then lay in the Tower for complicity with the popish plot, and that the garrison had always consisted largely of popish troops. They therefore ventured to hope that if they voted a supply for the place they would

receive assurance that they should not thereby augment the strength of their popish adversaries. The address was repeated a month later, and Charles replied by begging them to state what assurance they required, trusting that they would consider the present state of the kingdom in such a way as to enable him to preserve Tangier. Then came the final blow. The Commons could not be turned from the one question on which it seemed to them that the future of the country hung. They bluntly announced the condition of their assistance must be the passing of the Exclusion Bill and the dismissal of every minister who opposed it.<sup>1</sup>

So the knell of Tangier was sounded. Three days later Parliament was dissolved, and after a despairing effort in March to hold another at Oxford, which was dissolved after a week's session, Charles's attempts at constitutional government came finally to an end.

<sup>1</sup> *Commons Journals*, ix., November 15, 17, 29, December 20, 1680, and January 4, 7, 1681.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE EVACUATION OF TANGIER

LOUIS had won an incalculable victory. At last he had succeeded in sowing irremediable dissension between Charles and his Parliament. He had neutralised the only factor in the European situation that was beyond his strength, and the master of the seas was once more forced into the position of his pensioner, with no hope of escape. Charles, it is true, had finally triumphed in his ill-starred attempt to dominate the constitution, but it was at the cost of his position in Europe—the position which had been the one lofty sentiment of his life. On every side Louis was ready to pursue his career. In the Mediterranean he had never been better placed. The Languedoc canal was finished, and in the summer of 1681 it was opened with high festivity, while at Toulon Vauban had been at work doubling the capabilities and strength of the port and arsenal, and Du Quesne, ranging the Mediterranean with a formidable squadron, was at last asserting a real mastery over the Barbary corsairs. It was a moment of all others when Tangier should have reached the position that had so long been sought for it, and which, at the expense of so much blood and treasure, it had nearly attained.

For a couple of years longer it lay undisturbed under the governorship of Kirke, who succeeded Sackville. His relations with Fez, though salted with constant

bickerings, remained most cordial; the place continued to be regularly supplied; squadrons acting from it under Herbert and Cloudesley Shovell cruised against the corsairs with every success, and nothing beyond the iniquities of the garrison under Kirke's loose notions of good manners sullied its appearance of prosperity. While Kirke was allowing the place to become a sink of immorality and corruption, the Emperor continued to assure him of his admiration for the 'whiteness and cleanness of his heart,' and to vow 'he was the best of all Christians that ever were.' Still Kirke mistrusted him for many reasons. When the fleet went home to refit, the Emperor openly renounced the maritime clauses of the peace, the 'Sea treaty' as it was called, and the depredations of his ships went on as before. Kirke felt the peace could not last, and, while taking every precaution against surprise, never ceased to demand reinforcements and supplies. His importunity and his anxiety no doubt did something to hasten the end, but Charles continued to hold on. At the end of 1682, Herbert came out again with a powerful squadron to enforce the 'Sea treaty,' and with him he brought large quantities of stores and drafts of troops. The Moors then changed their note and were all obsequiousness, so little did it seem to require to keep Tangier safe.

Yet that little was more than Charles could spare in the crowd of difficulties that he had made for himself. The navy, moreover, had been going rapidly downhill. When the papist scare had sent the Duke of York abroad and Pepys to the Tower as a suspect, the office of Lord High Admiral had been put in commission. The men chosen for the duty, if we may believe half that Pepys says, were very ill chosen, and the old evils and abuses rapidly declared themselves. The King was robbed

right and left, and everything about the service except the budget was neglected.<sup>1</sup> Financial difficulties began to press the Court more and more severely, and, in the confusion and dishonesty that prevailed, Tangier naturally presented itself as a ready means of economy. Thus, early in 1683, Charles had to face the inevitable end of his autocratic policy, and Tangier was doomed.

In February, in answer to Kirke's continued demands for reinforcements, Sir Leoline Jenkins, Secretary of State, wrote to him complaining that Tangier was already costing more than all the home garrisons put together. The letter was followed by the arrival early in March of Admiral Sir John Berry with orders for Kirke to banish all the Jews. Kirke had already reported that through them the Moors had established a regular system of intelligence by which nothing in the garrison could be kept secret. This order was the first indication of what was coming.<sup>2</sup> Up to that time there appears to have been little suspicion in Tangier of the fate that overhung it. Kirke, with his hands strengthened by the men and stores which Herbert had brought out, was more busy than ever strengthening the fortifications and preparing for any outburst from his truculent admirer. Absolute secrecy was still maintained and no further sign was given. Though rumours began to disturb the garrison, they were little regarded. The secrecy indeed with which the resolution of the Government was shrouded was so profound that

<sup>1</sup> Pepys, *Memoires touching the Royal Navy*.

<sup>2</sup> Kirke to Jenkins, February 22, 1683, *Tangier Papers*, bundle 39. See also 'The first proposals for Tangier,' *Dartmouth MSS.* p. 84. The paper is undated, but it mentions Berry's mission, and thus fixes the time about which the evacuation was decided on. Berry reached Tangier on the Thursday before March 8, 1683, *ibid.* p. 80. The 'First Proposals' must therefore have been drawn up before he sailed, or early in February—about the time, that is, of Jenkins's complaint to Kirke. This is confirmed by what Dartmouth told Pepys. See *post*, pp. 127, 181-3.

its immediate cause is nowhere on record. Still, what it was is scarcely doubtful.

Sunderland's opportunism and the wiles of the French Ambassador had led him into supporting the Exclusion Bill, with the result that in February 1681 he had been struck off the Privy Council. He lost little time, however, in trimming his sails, and by Louise de Kéroualle's influence was reconciled to the Duke of York in August the next year, and at his request readmitted to the Council. But Barillon and the French mistress still pressed him forward, and with so much success that in January 1683 he re-entered the Government as Secretary of State for the North. It was just at this time the momentous Tangier question was reopened. Pepys indeed was expressly told by the man who had the best means of knowing the truth, 'that it was taken up again upon my Lord Sunderland's coming in again.' The King, he said, was himself the first mover of it, but clearly he thought that it was Sunderland's idea. There is indeed but too much reason to suspect that Sunderland went even further than urging the evacuation. There is evidence that about this time he made some kind of overtures to Barillon with a view to selling the place to France. Barillon apparently could not believe the offer was seriously made, and, suspecting some snare, refused to take the matter up, but the suggestion remains as one more stigma on Sunderland's name.<sup>1</sup>

The motive of Charles's advisers is clear enough. They were in the midst of their attack on the municipal

<sup>1</sup> Barillon to Louis, Aug. 15, 1683: 'Je craindrais de parler sur cette affaire à cause de ce qui s'est passé il y a six mois. . . . Milord Sunderland m'a déjà dit: "Vous voyez que l'offre qu'on vous a faite estait effective et qu'il n'a tenu qu'au Roi votre maistre d'avoir Tanger."' *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 44. It does not appear, from any despatch of Barillon's in the early part of the year, that he communicated this offer to Louis at the time.

corporations, and had just determined to clinch the King's constitutional triumph by an attack on the charter of London itself. To this end they desired not only to cut down every avoidable expense, but to get into the kingdom all the troops that could possibly be collected. The original draft scheme for the evacuation is much more concerned with the disposal of the garrison when it returned than with how to get it safely out. Barillon traced the whole scheme to the Duke of York, Rochester, and Sunderland, the nefarious triumvirate in whose hands Charles was now but a puppet. The Marquis of Halifax, Barillon's and James's chief opponent, did his best—so the Ambassador says—to stop it, supported by all who still clung to a hope of parliamentary government being restored.<sup>1</sup>

But all was of no avail. The discovery of the Rye House plot had put a fresh weapon into the hands of the King's evil counsellors, and they had their way. It was this surrender that marks Charles's final lapse into military despotism, and with the determination to evacuate Tangier he cut the last tie that bound him to the ideas of the Great Rebellion. It was that pregnant upheaval that had carried England to Mediterranean power, and it was its ebb that sucked her back.

In such haste was the Government to get the troops home that it was originally intended that all the ships available should assemble at Tangier in May. Some one, however, must have pointed out that it was an operation which could not be conducted in a hurry. At any rate the execution of the scheme was delayed for more elaborate preparations, and it was not till July 2 that the final instructions were signed. As a preliminary step to their execution, Herbert was recalled, and the project was kept an absolute secret, known to no one outside the King's

<sup>1</sup> Barillon to Louis, Aug. 15, 1683, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 44.

immediate circle, except to Pepys's informant, George Legge, recently made Lord Dartmouth. It was to him the obnoxious commission was to be entrusted. He had served with distinction throughout the Dutch wars as a naval officer, and had since risen through various offices to that of Master-General of the Ordnance and Master of the Horse to the Duke of York. It is in this appointment we see the hand that really loosed the British hold on the Mediterranean. Dartmouth was the most devoted partisan that James had, and since the defeat of the Exclusion Bill had settled his position as heir to the throne, the inevitable effect had been that it was he, not Charles, who was king. James's real reign began with the dissolution of his brother's last Parliament, and Dartmouth was one of the men he chiefly looked to for the repression of any attempt at resistance to his rule.

The story of the melancholy business, which this fine officer thus had thrust upon him, has fortunately been enlivened by Samuel Pepys. The manner in which he became connected with it is eloquent of the extreme secrecy in which the whole affair was wrapped. Everything had been done personally by the King and his brother. Neither the Admiralty nor the Tangier Council had been permitted to have a finger in the preparations; but on Saturday, July 28, Pepys, who since his release from the Tower had been closely attached to the Duke of York, received sudden orders to repair within forty-eight hours to Portsmouth, where the fleet was assembled. Not a word of explanation was given him, nor was it apparently till the following Friday, when Lord Dartmouth joined, that he was informed he was to go out on his staff. Still the secret of the expedition was withheld from him. Some hesitation seems to have prevailed at Court. Dartmouth had not yet been handed

his commission, and no sooner had he reached Portsmouth than he received an intimation from Sunderland that he was not to sail till further orders, which would probably reach him not later than Monday. But on that day, instead of sailing orders came a summons to Windsor 'to speak with the King once more.' What the trouble was no one could tell. All they knew was that the preparations for sailing were to proceed, and Sunderland assured the General there was nothing serious. 'I will only tell you now,' he wrote, 'that the occasion of these directions can be of no prejudice, and may be of advantage to your journey and the business you go about.'

It is Barillon who lets us into the secret. The fact was he had just and only just learnt what was in the wind, and he immediately hurried off a special messenger to Louis to ask how he was to act. He had further discovered that the Portuguese ambassador had also fathomed the secret, and was making the most strenuous efforts to be allowed an option of purchase. Arlington had betrayed the project, and what Barillon was so anxious to learn from Versailles was whether his master would prefer to see the place destroyed or in Portuguese hands. In view of his behaviour over Sunderland's offer six months previously, he did not think well to move in the matter directly, but clearly he had hopes that a purchase by the Portuguese might be made a step towards a French occupation. It was to consider this proposal of the Portuguese envoy that Dartmouth was summoned to Windsor. But every one was against it—James and his confederates because they believed the necessary negotiations would delay too long the return of the troops—Halifax because he feared it covered an eventual cession of the place to France. In vain the Portuguese envoy went so far as to call on Barillon and beg for

his support. The opposition was too well united, and all he could exact was that if a properly accredited plenipotentiary met Dartmouth at Tangier with full authority to accept the British terms, the thing might be arranged. Two hundred thousand crowns was believed to be Charles's price, though probably it was never seriously thought the suggestion would come to a head.<sup>1</sup>

At any rate the Portuguese move was not allowed to cause any further delay. In two days Dartmouth was back again and every one embarked the same day. Still they could not sail, for the weather kept obstinately adverse. Every one, as they lay idle at St. Helen's, did his best to penetrate the mystery; but, though Pepys was named in Dartmouth's commission as his sole councillor in the fleet, he was still no wiser than the rest. He had even written to his friends, he tells us, in perfect good faith to assure them that the rumours about the evacuation of Tangier had no foundation. He pardonably imagined that, if there had been any truth in them, he of all people would have been told. It was not till August 13, as they still lay windbound under the Isle of Wight, that Lord Dartmouth took him into his cabin and told him in the strictest confidence that the object of the expedition was the disarmament and destruction of Tangier. To Pepys it was a severe shock. It did not receive his approval, and since he had been so long Tangier secretary he was not a little nettled at not having been consulted. 'I shall,' he wrote, 'by the grace of God give the same, and perhaps more, obedience both passive and active to it than I might have done had my mean advice been preconsulted in it.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Barillon to Louis, Aug. 5-15, 9-19, and 13-23, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 44; Smith, *Tangier Diary*, 325 *et seq.*, *Dartmouth MSS.* pp. 87-8.

<sup>2</sup> Pepys to Houblon, St. Helen's, Aug. 16, 1683, Smith, i. 336.

In this praiseworthy spirit he continued to act. Dartmouth handed him a note of the reasons for the step which had been agreed on in the Cabinet, directing him to embody them in a minute. They were lame enough, but Pepys was equal to the task, adding fresh considerations which his pliable and well-informed brain was able to suggest. His work was of peculiar delicacy and importance. The fact was that every one concerned was highly nervous about what they had got to do. Tangier was the symbol of the new-born spirit of imperialism that pervaded the country. There was no doubt its abandonment would be unpopular, and unless it could be clearly justified there was the danger that Dartmouth and his staff would be made the scapegoats, and that Tangier would be used against them as Dunkirk had been used against Clarendon. Pepys with his way to make in the world was as anxious as any one. The hard part of it was that there were no definite instructions to ease the responsibility. In theory they were going out to report on the place and to act accordingly; and there was talk among the staff that the King meant to break the news to his people by saying that the experts had pressed him to do it against his will. Pepys therefore bluntly asked his chief how things stood. 'Before we parted,' he said, 'I asked my lord whether the King was indeed satisfied in this business; for,' he added characteristically, 'we should be able to give our advice accordingly in reference to what he might expect from it, whether the success was good or bad. He answered in plain words . . . that the King was the fondest man in the world of it, and had declared to Lord Dartmouth at his coming away that it was the greatest service any subject could do him. On my lord's adding that he had understood some persons at Court did nevertheless labour to render

this ill to the King, to do him hurt . . . I took occasion to say something of my being sorry for it; but he was not the first that had been so used in obeying the King's commands and labouring to serve him. He answered, it did not trouble him (though by his looks and manner of speech I saw sufficiently it did), for the King would do him right in it and did at this time discourse publicly of the folly of keeping Tangier any longer.'<sup>1</sup>

Having thus ascertained the official view, Pepys saw his way clear before him and promptly crystallised his opinion. 'Lord!' he exclaimed, as on September 14 they anchored in Tangier road, 'how could anybody ever think a place fit to be kept at this charge, that, overlooked by so many hills, can never be secured against an enemy?' On this note he continued to harp to his great comfort, and indeed it was the real crux of the situation. Not only was it the one valid excuse for the evacuation, but also a grave cause of anxiety as to whether the operation could be carried through without disaster. So far had the lines advanced, and so near to completion and well-built was the mole, that it was clear the work of demolition would take much longer and therefore be much more hazardous than was expected. Dartmouth began to doubt whether, with the force and stores at his command, it was even possible. He became seriously depressed and was barely prevented by Pepys and others from officially informing the Moors what was intended, and negotiating their forbearance. He had hoped the whole affair would be over in three weeks, but it was three weeks before it could be really begun.

A very necessary preliminary was to secure from the captains of the fleet a declaration that the place was unfit for a naval station. This difficult duty was entrusted

<sup>1</sup> *Tangier Diary*, p. 380.

to Sir John Berry, Dartmouth's vice-admiral, a 'tarpaulin' officer who had worked his way up from the fore-castle by sheer merit and hard fighting. In Charles's first war he won an action in the West Indies against the French and Dutch, and at the battle of Solebay had earned his spurs by rescuing the Duke of York when he was nearly overpowered by superior force. He had also served with distinction under Allin and others in the Mediterranean. He was assisted by Sir William Booth, the most successful of Herbert's captains against the corsairs. But even these men found the task extremely difficult. 'Sir William Booth,' wrote Pepys on October 14, 'gave me an account of the ado he had had with some of Herbert's young fellows to get signed the paper my lord desires about the mole and harbour of Tangier.'

It was no wonder. The mole was now 475 yards long with a mean breadth of nearly thirty-seven yards, and a height above low water mark of eighteen feet, and for the past four years Herbert and his captains had been making it the base of their successful operations against the corsairs. Yet they were expected to say that, owing to the nearness of 'the Great Ocean,' it was impossible to render the harbour secure except at a ruinous cost, that even if it could ever be completed it would quickly silt up, and that it was 'altogether unuseful to his Majesty for receiving, careening, or preserving his Majesty's ships.' With such a document to be signed it was certainly to Herbert's credit that it had been thought expedient to recall him. His stubborn independence and strong convictions were difficulties not to be faced at such a crisis. He had, however, left behind him several junior captains, who were devoted to him and his ideas. These men Dartmouth had express authority to command to his flag, provided he did not thereby interrupt the operations for which they had been

detailed. Dartmouth did call them to his flag, and—so Pepys tells us—went out of his way to gain their goodwill. Nevertheless, as it seems, they resented the supersession of their old chief, and it was among these men—'Herbert's creatures,' as Pepys calls them in loyal indignation—that the ringleaders of the opposition were found.

The most obstinate were Cloudesley Shovell, who had been flying his first flag as commodore of the little cruiser squadron that Herbert had left behind, Francis Wheler, and Matthew Aylmer—all of them men destined to rank among the founders of British Mediterranean power. But Pepys had no patience with them and the ideas their experience had given them. 'Though they have been prevailed with by Booth,' he says, 'to sign this, yet they did declare to Booth their satisfaction in the harbour when they signed it, and will be ready to do the like when they come into England. This is your men of honour and gentlemen! at least the two latter.'<sup>1</sup> Shovell was only a 'tarpaulin,' and presumably not expected by Pepys to forswear himself to oblige his chief. Aylmer was a young Irish officer of the 'courtier' type, who had only entered the service four years before, under the wing of the Duke of Buckingham. He rose to be Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, and afterwards, as governor of Greenwich Hospital, was the founder of the Naval School. Wheler also was to hold the same high command, and to be lost with his flagship and all hands in a gale off Gibraltar. Among other of 'Herbert's young fellows' was George Rooke, destined by a strange turn of fortune to be the means of giving back to his country what Pepys was helping to throw away. For it was when he was flying the Mediterranean flag that Gibraltar rose like a phoenix from the ashes of Tangier.

<sup>1</sup> *Tangier Diary*, pp. 393, 398, 411, 438. *Dartmouth MSS.* 89.

Still he was by nature a courtier and politician, and, whether from conviction or not, he seems to have made no bones about doing what was wanted.<sup>1</sup>

Against Pepys's ingenuity the indignation of the stalwart Mediterranean men was of no more avail than Rooke's compliance. A series of cunningly framed questions were put to them, from which they found it impossible to escape. Both Rooke and Shovell had careened their ships under shelter of the mole, but they had to confess it was done with some difficulty from the swell. Then they all had to face the ugly fact that on a recent occasion Herbert, having to refit his squadron, had carried the repairing hulk, which had been established at Tangier, and all the necessary stores over to Gibraltar, as being a better place for the work.<sup>2</sup> Entangled in admissions which they knew did not express their real judgment, it is no wonder they remained stubbornly in their old opinion. Whether or not the harbour could ever be made fit to receive the higher rates, they knew it was already a practicable station for the class of vessel that was best adapted for keeping a firm hand on the Barbary pirates, and for obtaining intelligence in time of war, no less than for harbouring the smaller merchantmen which were incapable of protecting themselves. Still there was no escape from Pepys's skill, and in ten days, about the middle of October, all the signatures were affixed. At the same time a similar declaration was obtained, apparently without difficulty, from the officers of the garrison as to the military defects of the place, which were real enough, and the work of demolition could proceed.

Of a Portuguese plenipotentiary nothing had been

<sup>1</sup> Davis, p. 231. He was then thirty-three and had commanded a ship under both Narbrough and Herbert.

<sup>2</sup> See the Captains' Report, *Tangier Papers*, bundle 40, Oct. 13, 1683, especially questions 7 and 8.

heard. The ambassador in London did not for a moment relax his efforts, and on Louis's instructions Barillon kept urging the Duke of York to agree. He went to see the Prince several times, as though on his own initiative, and pressed upon him the loss of prestige which the destruction of the fortress would entail, and the disgrace of so complete a reversal of policy. James would only reply that it was no disgrace for the King to reverse the policy of ministers that had given him bad advice, and it was better for the royal interest to have a strong body of troops at home than a weak naval station abroad. Any chance, moreover, which there might have been of the matter being carried through with sufficient promptitude was ended by the death of the Portuguese King, and Dartmouth had no alternative but to act on his obnoxious orders.<sup>1</sup>

It was a laborious undertaking and its difficulty gave the lie to the declaration that had been wrung from the seamen. Shere, the engineer who had succeeded Cholmley, calculated that without the foundations the mole then contained nearly three million cubic feet of concrete and masonry, weighing near 170,000 tons, all of which must be destroyed, and that it would take a thousand men over two hundred days to do it. Lord Dartmouth wrote home that the part which Shere had built was as hard as the rocks. It appeared almost indestructible, though, as the General said, 'he was showing his great abilities in the destruction of his own building.' As no ordinary military methods would touch it, he was blasting it to pieces with drills and small charges in the modern way, which to Pepys at least was new. Yet, in spite of all Shere's skill and zeal, like a man butchering his own child as they sympathetically said, it was soon clear that his

Barillon to Louis, Aug. 30-Sept. 9, *R.O. Baschet's Transcripts*, 44.

estimate of the time the demolition would take must prove correct. Month after month went by with continuous and infinite labour of the whole force at Dartmouth's command. Storms constantly hampered their efforts, and at the end of the year it was still far from done.<sup>1</sup>

As the work, upon which so much blood and treasure and so much high purpose and devotion had been spent, stubbornly yielded to Shere's ingenuity, lamentations came in from all sides. Typical of these is a letter written to Pepys by an Englishman in Cadiz before the work had actually begun. 'I heartily congratulate,' he says, 'your safe arrival at Tangier, but if you come about what we are persuaded here you do, I had rather you and all that come about the design had tarried at home. I am sure in no age, nor by any people, was ever Tangier thought useless and contemptible as not worth keeping, till this we live in, and that by our own countrymen. If we go as high as history affords us records, we shall find Tangier always esteemed . . . When the English had got Tangier, they, as well as all the world, believed they had a considerable and important place, as well for their convenience in all respects as for its capacity for prejudicing their enemies. . . . The French covet, the Spaniard and Hollander dread it, one as to trade, the other from neighbourhood and the prejudice they may receive from it. Then of the safeguard and convenience to trade in case of war with Spain, none that knows anything is ignorant. After all must a place, qualified by so many advantageous and unequalled benefits, be parted with on the score of its being chargeable, and we the only people

<sup>1</sup> In the *Tangier Papers* (R.O. Colonial), bundle 40, is an interesting plan showing how the mole was destroyed by blasting and crosscuts, and the débris used to foul the anchorage.

that ever thought so? Where is the honour and reputation of the nation? . . . The parting with it in any manner will render us very inconsiderable and necessitous to all the world: for what will they think of us, esteem or dread us, if we cannot maintain a place so much to our convenience to preserve? . . . You are, as much as any man, sensible of what advantage Tangier is to us here, and to the nation in general. If anything is designed against it, pray use your endeavours to prevent it.'<sup>1</sup>

Such protests were useless. At home the political struggle was uppermost in men's minds and everything had to be subservient to it. A week after the seamen's declaration was signed, Shere's first charge was fired. A week later again the Mayor and Corporation were embarked. Thereby the tie which bound Tangier to the Imperial Crown of Britain was severed, and, curiously enough, it was to George Rooke was assigned the duty of carrying them home. By the first week in November the last of the inhabitants were shipped away, and the work of demolition could go on without impediment. All through the winter it continued as well as the storms would permit, and with one eye always anxiously on the Moors. By the end of January the navy captains were able to report that the mole was ruined and destroyed, the harbour filled with stone and rubbish, and 'made unfit to receive, harbour, or protect from the weather, ships or vessels of any pirate, robber, or any enemies of the Christian faith or any other.' The delays and difficulties had been prodigious, owing to the complete miscalculations of the Cabinet, and, as Pepys tartly says, to their misguided determination to keep the secret from the proper officers of the navy and army, whereby it had been impossible to provide the expedition with the necessary stores. 'Hence

<sup>1</sup> Charles Russell to Pepys, Cadiz, October 7, 1683, Smith, i. 385.

I say,' he growls, 'how necessary that Ministers of State be men of general knowledge, and, among us, especially in sea matters.' His strictures were certainly not without excuse. The force was continually on the brink of starvation, and there were times when the forbearance of the Moors alone rendered food procurable.

To these and his other anxieties Lord Dartmouth had to add the depressing conviction that he was abandoning the Mediterranean to Louis. While he was breaking his heart over the destruction of the English foothold, France had attained a dominating position within the Straits. Du Quesne, by means of the newly devised bomb-ketches, or galliots as they were then called, had bombarded Algiers with a success no one had yet attained, and Toulon was more formidable than ever. 'Lord Dartmouth,' wrote Pepys, 'is mighty full of it, that the King of France designs by his late and present dealings with Algiers to make himself master of the Mediterranean, making the Turks his friends, and thereby enemies to us and others.'<sup>1</sup>

The mole destroyed and the harbour choked, there yet remained the more dangerous task of dismantling the fortifications on the land side and the withdrawal of the garrison. It took another month to accomplish, but it was done with consummate skill and thoroughness. Not a fort or redoubt was left standing, and yet the troops were embarked without the Moors attempting to interfere. On March 5, 1684, the fleet weighed, and Tangier ceased to be a British possession.

With it passed away the last claim of Charles's reign to distinction. For more than twenty years it had remained as a symbol of the higher aspirations which redeemed the cynical levity of his character, and through

<sup>1</sup> Smith, ii. 41, March 29, 1684. Cf. Dartmouth memorandum on this, dated December 10, 1683, *Dartmouth MSS.* p. 102.

fair weather and foul he had clung to it as though to raise a real monument to his better self. As it was, he could only write upon its remains the epitaph of his hopes. 'By the King's direction,' says Burchett in concluding his account of the destruction, 'there were buried among the ruins a considerable number of crown pieces of his Majesty's coin, which haply, many centuries hence, when other memory of it shall be lost, may declare to succeeding ages that that place was once a member of the British Empire.'

So with a smile, half humorous, half cynical, Charles dismissed his failure. What more pathetic glimpse could we have of all it meant to him? With the occupation he had inaugurated an imperial tradition that bade men look beyond the limits of their narrow lives. With its abandonment he marked his inability to understand those conditions of sympathy between government and people on which alone a lasting policy of empire can be based. With his final fall into despotism his dream faded from him. Could he but have brought himself to grasp the depth of that national sentiment on which what we now call 'Little Englandism' is based, his aspirations of empire would have received the support they deserved. The resources for which he pleaded so pathetically would have been granted in abundance, and Tangier would never have been abandoned. England, in retaining her hold upon the Mediterranean, would have kept the dominating position in Europe which Cromwell had made for her, and which Charles believed he could enhance.

His hope was no mere indolent fancy. He was a true sea-king, and intuitively understood, perhaps better than any of his councillors, all that the commerce of the Straits meant for the expression of his sea power. 'He has knowledge of many things,' wrote Burnet, 'chiefly

in all naval affairs. Even in the architecture of ships he judges as critically as any of the trade can do, and knows the smallest things belonging to it.' Pepys, than whom there was no better judge, could write of him in his most private memoranda, as a king 'who best understands the business of the sea of any Prince the world ever had,' and assures us that 'his Majesty possessed a transcendent mastery of all maritime knowledge.'<sup>1</sup> In the times of his deepest desperation at the intractability of his Parliament, it was always for his fleet and for Tangier that he pleaded most humbly. Never, except in Cromwell's best years, had the navy been so well administered as during his reign, never had the fleet been so intrinsically powerful, and never before had a regular naval station been established beyond the Narrow Seas. If Charles failed it was because he came to believe the fallacy that a strong imperial government can only rest on despotism. Abroad it may be so. For men of British race it is untrue. The ruins of the Tangier mole and Charles's buried coins bear witness of the truth, and there they still rest as Dartmouth left them to remind the world of the English King who tried to build an empire on the sands.

<sup>1</sup> Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p. 48, and Tanner, *Eng. Hist. Review*, xii. 19.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE NAVAL STRATEGY OF WILLIAM III.

It is a curious fact, the significance of which it would be as wrong to ignore as to exaggerate, that the period during which England abandoned the Mediterranean coincides exactly with the zenith of Louis XIV.'s power. Within six months from the lowering of the British flag at Tangier, the truce of Ratisbon was signed, which confirmed to France her hold upon the Empire, and is usually taken as marking the culmination of Louis's triumphs. Within a year of the reappearance of a British fleet within the Straits, Namur capitulated, and Louis was facing the first of that series of reverses which brought his empire about his ears.

In dealing with European history from one aspect, nothing is easier than to lose our sense of proportion, to exaggerate the importance of our particular point of view. We have now traced, step by step for nearly a century, the remarkable phenomena that accompanied the interference of the two Northern sea powers in the Mediterranean. We have seen how constantly that interference or its removal seemed to shift the whole action of the stage. We have now to witness the last act of our drama, when those two powers were joined in one, and after ineffectual efforts to baffle the ambitions of France they at last threw the mass of their strength into the Mediterranean and immediately saw the gigantic system of the enemy begin to totter. Many were the forces at work, and

in watching the one that turned the scale we must never for a moment forget it was part of a whole. Still it would be hard to say that any other part was so powerful, and for that very reason we must be on our guard not to place it too high. With this warning we may safely set out to trace the last phase of the epic to that resounding catastrophe which finally fixed the position of England as a great power in Europe.

For a time it seemed that the evacuation of Tangier had definitely arrested the development of British naval power. Charles II. did not survive the loss of his most cherished possession a year, and the accession of his brother made England internationally more than ever a dependency of France. In Germany the Emperor formed the famous League of Augsburg to curb Louis's further aggression. But with the British power neutralised it could barely restrain his advance, and still less break his hold. It was not till the accession of William restored England to the European system that anything could be done. By us that far-reaching event has come to be regarded as a purely domestic revolution. To William himself and to all the rest of Europe it was a stroke of international politics that brought the wealth and the fleets of the two great Protestant powers into line against France, and it is in this aspect that it concerns us here.

England was immediately plunged into the war of the League of Augsburg, and Louis found himself confronted with almost the whole of Europe. Although the British sea power was the real life of the new coalition, it was not for some time that it was able to assert itself. During the first years of the war we can discern no trace of the further development in naval strategy which we have been following from early Stuart times. Louis's splendid organisation enabled him to take the initiative, and

William's fleet was kept busy in trying to obtain the command of the Narrow Seas in order to secure the English coasts from invasion and to recover Ireland from James and his French allies. The break in our naval history had been so complete that it seemed to go back a century, and as it were recapitulate itself. It is more than doubtful whether William perceived the true direction in which our naval policy had been gradually drawn, until the recapitulation brought him by experience to the point where Charles II. had been forced to break it off. We seem at first to go back to the almost mediæval strategy of the wars of Henry VIII. No attempt was made to strike a real blow at France in the main seat of her power. Action towards the Mediterranean was quite subsidiary. It was confined to ill-conceived attempts to prevent squadrons from Toulon passing to Brest, and to protect the Levant trade. Both were unsuccessful. De Tourville's victory off Beachy Head marks the one failure; his swoop upon the great Smyrna convoy the other. Even after Russell's victory off La Hogue had given William the command, it was only used in the old way. The fleet was mainly employed in attacks on the French Channel ports, and in raids upon the coasts, which had no higher object than that of crippling the action of privateers and confusing the strategy of the French armies by diversions.

For William as for Henry VIII. the war was at first a military war, and the fleet was kept subsidiary to the military operations. So soon as he had secured the command of the Narrow Seas, and had recovered Ireland, he naturally flung himself into the old cockpit in the Low Countries, which to a soldier seemed clearly the key of the situation, and it was not till the fifth year of the war that a radical change in Louis's strategy opened William's

eyes to his real power. Then there was something Napoleonic in the rapidity and completeness with which he grasped the new idea and changed his front. It has been the accepted view that it was his tastes and limitations that had made the war mainly military, that he was a man who could only see war with a soldier's eye, and was incapable of viewing the great contest as a whole, in which the sea must play its inevitable part. It is difficult, however, to see how this censure can survive a study of the conditions under which he resumed the broken thread of English action in the Mediterranean.

When, in the autumn of 1693, William returned from his defeat at Landen to meet his British Parliament, it was to find the air heavy with the disaster that had overtaken the Smyrna fleet. During the spring the whole North Sea, Baltic, and British trade, that was bound for the Mediterranean and the southward, had assembled in the Channel, waiting to get safely past Brest. British, Dutch, German, and other vessels numbered nearly four hundred sail, and the protection of this huge convoy was assigned to the main fleet, then commanded jointly by the Tory admirals, Killigrew, Delaval, and Shovell, who had ousted Russell after La Hogue. Their orders were to escort it to a safe distance beyond Brest, and then detach Sir George Rooke, who had just received his knighthood, with the British and Dutch Mediterranean divisions to take it on. Having gone some fifty leagues beyond the point of danger, the admirals considered their duty done, and parted company with Rooke and the convoy. Unfortunately, they had not taken sufficient care to ascertain whether Tourville was still in Brest. The port was so well screened by cruisers, as they afterwards explained, that it could only be reconnoitred by a squadron. Why they did not use

a squadron was never explained. The result was that when Rooke reached Cape St. Vincent on his way to his rendezvous at Cadiz, his scout vessels discovered that there was an enemy's force of unknown strength in Lagos Bay, on the south coast of Portugal. He himself was for holding back till he found out what it was; but Van der Goes, his Dutch colleague, protested that if they stopped for every little squadron they got in contact with they would never finish the voyage. Besides, the wind was fair and they could certainly run through anything that was likely to be in front of them. Rooke gave way, and the whole fleet stood into the bay.

Some French vessels that were seen at anchor at once cut their cables and ran, setting fire to the store ships that were too slow to escape. This, and some false information given by two French naval officers who were taken prisoners, confirmed the impression that what was in front of them was merely a small squadron hurrying from Brest into the Mediterranean. As a matter of fact it was Tourville himself, with the whole Brest fleet of seventy of the line. Though the prisoners asserted that the hurried retreat which deceived Rooke was due to the belief that his force was the British main fleet, Tourville was and is still believed to have cunningly devised the whole scene in order to draw Rooke into his meshes.

In any case it had the desired effect. Next day, as the allies held on for Cadiz, they found themselves in the presence of the whole French fleet. Rooke—so he says—was for fighting and sacrificing his squadron for the convoy. Van der Goes was against it, advising flight; and in face of the Dutch admiral's protests Rooke did not feel justified in persisting in his desperate course. Seeing how completely they had been entrapped the flight was managed with considerable success. Tourville, being

far to leeward, had launched his light division in general chase to take hold of the allies' rear till he could get up. Rooke and his colleague, however, by a bold show of fight, frightened the officer in command of the chasing squadron into forming line of battle, and the result was that three-fourths of the convoy and the whole of Rooke's division escaped. The loss fell principally on the Germans and Dutch, not more than five-and-twenty English vessels being taken, and some of the richest of those only because they took a line of their own and were caught afterwards in Gibraltar and other Spanish ports. Still, the loss was bad enough, and the shock which the sense of insecurity produced in London was very severe. On no point was the Exchange more sensitive than on the 'Smyrna fleet,' as it was called, from what was then the chief Levant port; and to think that the costly navy, for which they had to sacrifice so much, could not protect it pointed to a piece of incompetence that was not easy to forgive.

Nor had William anything to show against the French success. Although, during his defeat at Landen, he had inflicted such loss on his enemy and so skilfully retrieved his position afterwards that they gained little or nothing by the victory, yet everywhere else the campaign had added to the lustre of Louis's arms and diminished the hopes of the allies. On the German side the quarrels of the members of the League and the successes of the Turks had enabled him to more than hold his own. On the Italian frontier, where the Duke of Savoy, in the pay of England and Holland, was on guard between the Gulf of Genoa and the Alps, the French Marshal Catinat had won a decisive victory, and laid open the way into Piedmont, while over against him the Duc de Noailles had forced his way into Catalonia and seized the fortress port of Rosas in the Gulf of Lions. Thus not only was Louis

in a fair way to secure in the next campaign the focal point on which the cohesion of the Hapsburg system had always depended, but he had also a base through which the invasion of Spain could be nourished from Toulon and Marseilles. Louis, who was beginning to feel severely the exhaustion of his titanic struggle, immediately recognised the value of what he had gained for relieving the unendurable strain. By vigorously pushing his advantages he saw he might force Savoy and Spain out of the alliance, and, with his rear thus secured, he would be able to throw the whole weight of his power against William and the Empire. So fickle was Savoy, and so faint the Spaniard, that success was certain if only he could control his own portion of the Mediterranean, and so once more the struggle for European dominion swung back to the old centre.

After Tourville's brilliant exploit on the Smyrna convoy with the Brest squadron, he had passed on into the Mediterranean, and towards the end of the summer of 1693 he and D'Estrées were in Toulon with a fleet such as had never been seen before within the Straits. It consisted of ninety-three sail of the line and sixty of the lower rates, representing nearly the whole naval force of France which had survived Russell's victory at La Hogue.<sup>1</sup> It was no wonder that William saw the need of changing his strategy. With such a force to overawe them it was impossible that the weaker Mediterranean powers could remain staunch to the Grand Alliance. It is true that Tourville with some sixty sail passed out again to Brest and Rochefort, but this was mainly to relieve the pressure in the Toulon arsenal, and was not necessarily an indication of a change in Louis's Medi-

<sup>1</sup> Chevalier, *Hist. de la marine française jusqu'au traité de paix de 1763*, p. 193.

terranean policy. There was every possibility that Tourville, who was busy refitting as many of the Brest squadron as the failing French finances would allow, would repeat his move as soon as he was ready for sea, and the first object of British strategy therefore was to prevent his getting back into the Mediterranean.

It was clear to every one that the campaign of 1694 was likely to be the most critical of the war, and for the allies the horizon could scarcely look blacker. Fortunately it was one of those occasions when at home the national spirit manifested itself at its best. The bungling and disasters of the past year, instead of shaking the country, had bred a sullen determination to see the thing through and stand by the man it could trust. It was the Tory ministers, not William, on whom displeasure fell. They were dismissed together with the Tory admirals. Russell was restored to the post of Commander-in-Chief, and William reopened negotiations with the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Whigs. So, though men might scold and grumble, when the King came to ask his Parliament for help, they poured treasure into his lap, and a fleet of nearly three hundred sail was able to be commissioned during the year.<sup>1</sup>

The 'main fleet in the Channel and for service in the Mediterranean,' as it was expressed, was originally settled at ninety-two sail, besides fire-ships, bomb-vessels, auxiliaries, and small craft.<sup>2</sup> This fleet included the usual

<sup>1</sup> See the returns made to the House of Lords the following winter (*House of Lords MSS.* new series, i. 461, 467, 472 *et seq.*). The abstract shows 248 navy ships, of which 181 were rated ships, and the rest tenders and auxiliaries. There were also 23 hired ships, of which 17 were fourth and fifth rates, and the rest hospital and store-ships. Besides these there were 24 vessels building. The main fleet absorbed 93, Wheeler's Mediterranean squadron 28, cruisers and convoy ships on specified stations 98, besides 14 on the northern coasts. The rest were for the most part in the West Indies or fitting in the dockyards.

<sup>2</sup> *Harleian MSS.* 1898, f. 32 *et seq.*, where the whole estimates and details

Mediterranean squadron, but it must not be inferred that the estimates indicate any distinct departure from the old lines of Mediterranean action. If such a departure already existed in William's mind, he seems to have kept it to himself, at least during the winter months, when he was wearily endeavouring to form his new administration, and to remove Shrewsbury's scruples about taking office. The ships intended for service in the Mediterranean were merely a cruising squadron, though stronger than usual, detached in the old manner from the main fleet for convoy duty and commerce protection. It consisted of some twenty sail of third to sixth rates, besides fire-ships and auxiliaries, under Sir Francis Wheeler, and in the last days of 1693 he repaired to his station in company with a smaller Dutch squadron under Vice-Admiral Gerard Callenburgh.<sup>1</sup> His instructions were to convoy the Levant trade as far as Cadiz, to remain there a month to cover the home-coming of the Spanish treasure fleet if it had not already arrived, and then, after detaching a small squadron to take back the homeward-bound trade, to proceed with his convoy into the Mediterranean. On his return he was to arrange a junction with the admiral of the Spanish Armada of the Ocean, and co-operate with him for the guard of the Straits and the defence of the Spanish coasts.<sup>2</sup>

of the various squadrons are set out. The extra vessels over and above the 'rated' ships included fire-ships, bomb-vessels or galiots, machine vessels (i.e. explosion vessels), five hospital ships, besides brigantines (oared despatch boats), and yachts.

<sup>1</sup> Burchett (*Transactions at Sea, 1688-1697*, p. 201) gives the squadron as 16 third rates, 7 fourths, 1 sixth, 6 fire-ships, 2 bomb-vessels, a hospital ship, and a store-ship, or 34 in all. The *Harleian MS.* gives it as it actually sailed, as 8 third rates, 6 fourths, 1 fifth, 4 sixths, and 6 fire-ships, or 25 in all.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Considerations touching the employment of the King's and Dutch ships in the Mediterranean and at Cadiz,' *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 62-77, wrongly assigned to 1692. Wheeler's instructions are *ibid.* f. 362, November 20, 1693, and Burchett, p. 201.

So far, then, there is no indication of any radical change of strategy. The combined squadron at the Straits was clearly little more than a development of the Cromwellian idea of commerce protection with a powerful cruising squadron, such as Blake had wielded in the old days. No doubt it was intended to prevent small detachments of French ships slipping out of the Atlantic ports and passing into the Mediterranean. But the main fleet was still bound to the Narrow Seas, and the chief design for frustrating a concentration at Toulon was to be the surprise and capture of Brest before Tourville could sail. Some idea there probably was that Russell should subsequently employ part of his fleet in acting with Wheler against the expected operations of the French in Catalonia, but the development of the design cannot be traced till events forced it to the front. Up till the end of March there is no indication of it in the Admiralty orders.

The tendency was even in the opposite direction. On arriving at Cadiz Wheler reported that he was very doubtful as to how far he could even protect the trade with the force at his command. The Mediterranean was said to be swarming with French cruisers and privateers. The fleet at Toulon was being fitted out with diligence, while the Spaniards had not even begun work on theirs, and could not possibly be ready for sea for three or four months.<sup>1</sup> The intelligence he sent home was no doubt confirmed through other channels and his orders were immediately modified. He was now directed not to enter the Straits at all, but to return to Cadiz and secure his ships there till the Spaniards were ready for sea or till he received reinforcements from home. If he hears for certain that the Toulon fleet has come out and is bound for

<sup>1</sup> *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 366, January 19 and 29, 1694.

the north, he is to return forthwith and rejoin the main fleet. But even this discretion was not long allowed him. In a few days the news of the French activity became so serious that he was ordered to return immediately.<sup>1</sup>

For the moment, at any rate, the idea of drastic action in the Mediterranean was given up. Following Wheler's recall Russell on the last day of March received instructions from the Admiralty to take command of ninety-three specified ships, of which forty-six were of the first three rates, nineteen fire-ships, seven bomb-vessels, four hospital ships, and four brigantines or despatch-boats, and with these and such others as might from time to time be sent to him, he is directed to 'proceed with the Dutch fleet to the westwards and do his best to harass the enemy without expecting further orders, and to protect the trade passing in and out of the Channel.'<sup>2</sup> Not a word yet of the Mediterranean—at least publicly.

A few days, however, before these orders were issued and while Russell's fleet was still far from ready for sea, a very serious piece of news came to increase the critical aspect of the situation. Wheler's statement of the difficulty of his position in no way indicated that he shrank from carrying out his orders, and before his recall could reach him he had already sailed for the Mediterranean with his convoy, determined to fight his way through the French cruising squadrons. As ill-luck would have it, however, he met off the mouth of the Straits a storm of exceptional fury, and mistaking Gibraltar Bay for the fairway he was cast away and lost with his flagship and a number of his squadron and convoy. His vice-admiral, Hopsonn, had been already detached with the homeward-

<sup>1</sup> *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 378 and 382.

<sup>2</sup> *House of Lords MSS. (Hist. MSS. Com.)*, vol. i. (n.s.) p. 463.

bound trade, thus further weakening the fleet, and Callenburgh, the Dutch admiral, by virtue of his rank, succeeded to the chief command of the combined force. Rear-admiral Nevell, the remaining English flag-officer, was still for going on; but Callenburgh, in view of the expected junction of the Toulon and Brest squadrons, declared it would be madness, and Nevell was thus forced to return to Cadiz to refit, with no hope of being able to protect the trade in his charge, and still less of effectually opposing the passage of the Brest or Rochefort ships through the Straits.<sup>1</sup> At the same time it was known in London that D'Estrées and Tourville had left Paris for their commands at Toulon and Brest, and that Marshal de Noailles was about to take the field in Catalonia. Thus, so far from there being any prospect of interfering with the French initiative, there was every likelihood of the Straits squadron being attacked and destroyed in Cadiz.

It was clear therefore that something drastic had now to be done to save the situation in the Mediterranean; and yet so behindhand were the naval preparations at home that it was not till the end of April that Russell had been able to go down to Portsmouth to hoist his flag. On him had rested the bulk of the work during the winter, and for his reward he was named, on the eve of his departure, First Lord of the Admiralty. His place at home was filled by Rooke, who, so far from being involved in the disgrace of the other Tory admirals, was given a seat on the Admiralty Commission and retained William's confidence as a naval expert throughout the rest of his

<sup>1</sup> See Nevell's despatch dated Cadiz, May 6, 1694 (*Home Office, Admiralty*, iv.), and another from Gibraltar, March 11 (*ibid.* vii. 9). De Jonge confirms his statement that it was Callenburgh, as Commander-in-Chief, who decided to retire into Cadiz, citing his despatch to the States General, dated March 20, *Nederlandsche Zeevezin*, iv. i. 519.

reign. The instructions which Russell received at Kensington, on taking his leave, disclose the first definite conception of the new strategy. They were of the most confidential character, under the King's sign manual, and they reveal the exact stage which the project of a Mediterranean campaign had reached in William's mind. 'It being not yet known,' they run, 'in what manner the French will dispose of their fleet this summer, Admiral Russell is directed, (1) in case the French fleet is at Brest or Belle Isle, to attempt to burn or destroy it; (2) in case he hears it is at sea, to search for it, but not to go beyond the latitude of Finisterre; and (3) in case he has trustworthy information that it or part of it has gone to the Mediterranean or south of Finisterre, to follow and attack it. The Admiral is not to wait for further orders, but is to report from time to time to a Secretary of State and to the Admiralty.'<sup>1</sup>

The whole responsibility for the momentous step that was in contemplation was thus thrown on Russell's shoulders, and as things stood the orders filled him with misgiving. Before he reached Portsmouth, intelligence had come in that on April 12 Tourville had received orders to repair overland to Toulon 'to order affairs there,' and that, though the first and second rates at Brest were laid up for the summer, a squadron of the smaller ships of the line was about to sail for the Mediterranean under Château-Rénault.<sup>2</sup> The French were again screening the port so well with their cruisers and privateers that cer-

<sup>1</sup> The resolution was laid before the Committee of the Council on April 10, 1694 (see Sec. Trenchard's notes, *Home Office, Admiralty*, vii. 18), and agreed to on April 19 (*ibid.* f. 33). The final orders were dated 'Kensington, April 24, 1694.' See *House of Lords MSS. (Hist. MSS. Com.)* vol. i. (n.s.) p. 459, where will be found the whole of the fleet orders at this time, as they were furnished to the Lords in response to their call for papers in January 1695.

<sup>2</sup> Received April 27, *Home Office, Admiralty*, vii. 19.

tain intelligence was hard to come by. About the same time, however, a captain who had been scouting came in to report that with great difficulty he had succeeded in looking into Brest and had seen a French fleet standing to the southward.<sup>1</sup> Such information, combined with Tourville's departure for Provence, could only indicate that the main action of the French navy was to be developed from Toulon, and it was there with his old adversary that Russell's heart was.

Still he was bound by his orders to make sure of Brest before moving, and this was no small difficulty. At Spithead he found nothing ready for attacking a fortified port. Troops, bomb-vessels, and stores had not yet arrived, and half the fleet was not paid, and could not be moved till it was. Still, with thirty-five Dutch and English vessels that were available, he put to sea the first week in May to look into Brest; but it is clear he wished to leave it alone altogether.<sup>2</sup> By this time his friend the Duke of Shrewsbury had accepted office, and, though no more than Secretary of State, was in effect Prime Minister. To him Russell began to pour out his woes in a correspondence which has left us a picture of the whole episode so vivid and intimate that we still feel the feverish pulse of the time beating as it were under our touch. 'I am afraid,' he wrote from the 'Britannia' at St. Helen's, as soon as he had hoisted his flag, 'these two designs, Brest and the Straits, will hinder one another and may make neither effectual. . . . I have no very good prospect of success on Brest—that is if the ships are gone from Brest Water.'<sup>3</sup> This under

<sup>1</sup> Captain Wright's despatch, *Home Office, Admiralty*, vii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> He took 19 English and 16 Dutch ships with him, leaving behind 20 English and 7 Dutch unpaid. See list sent up by Sir C. Shovell, May 4, 1694, *Harleian MSS.* 1898, f. 33.

See Coxe's *Correspondence of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury*, p. 192, where will be found all the more secret papers relating to Russell's Mediterranean campaigns. Others are in *Buccleuch MSS.*, vol. ii.

his instructions was the main point he had to decide, and next day he weighed and stood away for Brest.

In Shrewsbury's answer the note of vagueness and indecision is still clear. 'I have long apprehended,' he wrote on May 5, 'that these two designs will interrupt and spoil one another. I am not enough instructed in what can or cannot be done at Brest to give judgment upon that matter; but I doubt if, after the resolutions have been taken for the Mediterranean and the instructions you have received thereupon, any great prejudice should happen to that service by delay, people would be apt to impute the faults to you, unless you have positive orders to warrant you in it. If you should go before Brest and find that squadron not yet gone to the Mediterranean, I suppose you will think it advisable to spend a little time if anything could be attempted upon them . . . but I cannot tell even in that case whether you might not think it reasonable to make some detachment which, joined with Neville's ships, might be in a condition to keep the Toulon squadron from giving any assistance to the besieging a Spanish seaport town, which the French in Catalonia seem to aim at. But that which I think most likely to be the case is that the Brest squadron will be gone for the Straits before you come thither, and then in my poor opinion all possible haste should be made to follow them.'

These vague counsels, which rather indicated than solved the difficulties, can only have served to increase the nervousness which Russell felt in having practically to decide the direction which the war was to take for the year. It was not long, however, before he saw his way plainly pointed out. The first week in May the King had left London, as usual, to conduct the military operations in Flanders; and the first news that greeted him was

that the rumour of the Brest squadron having sailed, and sailed for the Straits, was true.<sup>1</sup> Whatever his hesitation before, he now came to an immediate decision. The old tradition could bind him no longer, and, taking the whole responsibility on his own shoulders, he sat down to pen an order which should be treasured as one of the leading documents of British naval history. 'There can be no longer any doubt,' he wrote to Shrewsbury on May 14, 'that the squadron which left Brest on the 7th (n.s.) of this month has sailed for the Mediterranean after joining the ships from Rochefort, so that Admiral Russell has no time to lose in following them; and although it is not your department I am well assured you will use your endeavours to hasten his departure, and persuade him to leave to the squadron which remains in these parts the execution of the attempt on Brest.'

Political and financial difficulties had kept the King so late in England that he found himself deprived of the initiative in Flanders, and his main hope for the year was now centred on what the fleet could achieve in the Mediterranean. On that he boldly resolved to stake his all, and so with the high resolution that marks the great captains from the small, he penned his memorable order. Russell needed no persuasion to obey. The King's decision reached him when at the end of May he returned fuming from his reconnaissance to pick up the remainder of his fleet at St. Helen's. He had found Brest practically defenceless and was raging that the chance was lost for want of the troops and bomb-vessels that should have been with him. 'The delay,' he wrote in his breezy way, 'must lie where it ought, on that driveller, the General of the Ordnance.' Possibly he was right, for Henry Sidney's tenure of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the information of Daniel Palot, received some time in May, saying that he had seen *Château-Rénault* sail for Barcelona with 23 of the line, 5 or 6 'bombardears,' and 52 sail in all. *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 466.

office, though it procured him the earldom of Romney, is only remembered by the brilliant display of fireworks with which he greeted William's triumphant return from Namur the following year. Russell no longer believed in the practicability of surprising the place, and was only too glad to leave the attempt to a subordinate. Moreover, the news from Catalonia made him keener than ever to be away. De Noailles had already laid siege to Palamos below Rosas, and if it fell there would be nothing between the victorious French army and Barcelona. Not knowing that Noailles was even more hampered for want of money than himself, his abiding fear was that he would be too late, and he fell to excusing himself and scolding the Treasury in the most modern fashion. 'I will not say where it stuck,' he wrote, 'but it is not hard to guess, and pranks of this kind will some time or other, besides disappointing the services designed, put you to greater hazard if not looked into; for as the navy of England is the most certain security to the country, so it is a service neglected till every petty thing is provided for.' The King was no less impatient and anxious than Russell. 'I am under great uneasiness,' he wrote to Shrewsbury on May 22, 'lest our squadron should arrive too late in the Mediterranean. If you could expedite this business by writing to Admiral Russell or by despatching the ships that remain, it would be of the utmost importance.' And again, three weeks later, 'God grant that Russell may soon arrive in the Mediterranean, as from that alone we expect success in this campaign. May God confer on us this favour!'

But Russell had needed no urging. He was already gone. So important, however, was the Brest design still considered that in the mouth of the Channel he had detached nearly half his own fleet and a number of the Dutch against it under Lord Berkeley, with Shovell as his

vice-admiral, and General Tollemache in command of the troops.<sup>1</sup> Little as Russell thought of the enterprise, such a force, in spite of the betrayal of the design by Marlborough and others, should have achieved something better than the costly repulse that awaited it. Russell at least had done all he could for its success, and, free of the task he mistrusted, he held away southward with all speed the weather would permit. Without calling at any Spanish port, he sent in to Cadiz to summon Callenburgh and Nevell to his flag; but so baffling and stormy was the weather that it was not till July 1 that he reached his rendezvous off the mouth of the Straits. Without counting an almost worthless Spanish contingent that at last had been patched up for sea, he had now a fleet of sixty-three of the line, and a full proportion of minor rates and auxiliaries; but the long delays at starting and the tedious voyage had permitted things to reach so critical a stage that it was very doubtful whether he was not already too late.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Russell's mem. to Berkeley, May 29, *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 460, and see *House of Lords MSS.* (n.s.) vol. i. p. 485. The division, which included 20 of the line and 10 fire-ships, numbered 40 sail, and with the Dutch division of 19 ships and 4 bomb-vessels, 63. Russell was left with 32 of the first four rates and 53 British ships in all, of which 9 were fire-ships. Fire-ships at this time, it must be remembered, were not merely old vessels intended to be burnt in action when occasion arose. They were primarily second-class cruisers, as we should now say, and were armed, manned, and commanded like any other navy ship of their rate. Their dual function was indeed curiously like that of 'Destroyers' in a modern fleet.

<sup>2</sup> De Jonge (*op. cit.* p. 521), from the Dutch official documents, gives the fleet at 75 of the line (50 to 100 guns). Of these, 41 were British, 24 Dutch, and 10 Spanish. The Dutch included four 90-gun three-deckers, and the British four first and second rates (90 to 100 guns). There were 19 fire-ships. In the *Memoirs* of Byng, who was Russell's first or flag-captain, the force is given as 64 of line, English and Dutch, and 41 Spanish of all rates. *Memoirs relating to the Lord Torrington* (*Camden Society*, 1889, ed. Prof. Laughton), p. 67. This work is a principal authority for the campaign, 'the business of the fleet,' as it says, 'passing through the first captain of the admiral, and he being esteemed as his council.'

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE MAIN FLEET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

A FEW days after Russell had left London to hoist his flag, Tourville had received orders to move out of Toulon and take up a position in Hyères Roads. In his eyes the move was strategically unsound, but after pointing out to Louis the disadvantages of the position, in case he should be attacked, he obeyed. The order was followed by a request from Noailles that he would join him at Rosas, which was to be the base of his operations against Palamos and Barcelona. Thither he accordingly moved about the middle of May, and Noailles at once took the field. Advancing to the banks of the Ter, where a miserable Spanish army was in position to bar his road to the southward, he completely defeated it on May 17. The very day of the victory, Château-Rénault with the Brest and Rochefort squadrons joined Tourville's flag. Palamos was forthwith invested by sea and land, and taken by storm before the end of the month. Gerona, the district capital, situated at the point where the great inland road to Barcelona crossed the Ter, was then attacked and reduced in less than a week with barely a show of resistance. There was now practically nothing between the victorious marshal and his objective except the insignificant fortress of Hostalrich, and Tourville's fleet had already moved down to blockade Barcelona pending the advance of the army.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Duc de Noailles*, i. 360 et seq. (*Petitot*, vol. lxxi.); Stanhope, *Spain under Charles II.*

Such was the news that greeted the impatient British admiral. Barcelona was still safe, but in the direst danger. The French fleet, as it was reported to him, consisted of seventy sail, and was echeloned from Barcelona as far south as the Ebro, as though feeling to get contact with him. There was still time, therefore, and he was in high hope of a fight—a second La Hogue to retrieve the situation. 'I will not lose one moment's time to get at them,' he wrote to Shrewsbury, 'that if they design to stay for us, as I suppose they will, if they be the number reported, we may soon come to a deciding blow; that when all are killed that are to be killed, the rest may return home before cold weather and Michaelmas storms come in, which I apprehend for these three-deck ships.'<sup>1</sup> This fear, in view of what followed, must be noted. Added to the overwhelming sense of responsibility that was oppressing him, it was almost more than he could bear; nor must he be blamed for it, seeing that for the first time since Drake persuaded Howard to attempt to destroy the Spanish Armada in Coruña in 1588, the fortunes of the country were being staked on a bold offensive beyond the limits of the British Seas. 'Surely,' he wrote privately to Shrewsbury, 'a short time with a fair wind will put it to the trial, and then I may hope to be coming home again. It is a very pretty thing to be an admiral; but really I think to have three kingdoms at one's disposal after one year's fatigue at sea is not a reward to a man that can live ashore and has no ambition to be great.'

To increase his trouble the fair wind would not come. For a whole week he had to lie under Cape Espartel with a succession of fogs and easterly winds.<sup>2</sup> But a westerly

<sup>1</sup> He also wrote in almost identical terms to Secretary Trenchard, July 1, *H.O. Admiralty*, v. 602, and cf. *Buccleuch MSS.*, II. i. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Russell to Trenchard, Cartagena, July 13, *ibid.* v. 668.

breeze came to release him at last, and then, with a full sense of the gravity of the step that was being taken, he carried the fleet through the Straits, and the die was cast that committed British naval policy to its final shape. It is for his not too decisive victory at La Hogue that Russell is chiefly remembered in British naval annals. Yet were it not for the often spurious importance which actions give to naval movements, he would rather be remembered as the man who first led the British main fleet into the Mediterranean.

The reason he was denied the battle which he expected, and which would have given his great movement immortality, is no less significant than the movement itself. For the French immediately met the new strategy by a parry which inaugurated the defensive line that thenceforth they were destined to take in the Mediterranean almost without interruption. It was Tourville himself who, when Louis's fleet began to be overweighted by that of William, had first adopted the characteristic naval policy of the French. By his famous 'campaign *au large*' he had shown how, by keeping a powerful fleet in being, the English could be compelled to keep their ships also together in fleets and thus leave the seas more open to the action of cruisers and privateers. From that policy he had been forced by higher orders into the disastrous day of La Hogue. His defeat was rightly rewarded by a repentant king with the baton of a Marshal of France, and his ideas now ruled supreme. In these ideas his faith remained unshaken. Louis was naturally still anxious to see his costly fleet supporting his military movements, but after the lesson of La Hogue he could no longer be persuaded to ride roughshod over Tourville's judgment. As De Noailles, therefore, was receiving the capitulation of Gerona, and was about to pursue his

triumphant march to Barcelona, a letter was put into his hand from Louis, warning him that a British squadron of forty-five sail was starting for the Mediterranean. He was authorised, therefore, to take Gerona, an operation on which the Marshal had insisted as a vital preliminary to Barcelona, if he had not already done so, but on no account was he to venture further till the naval situation was more certain. The fact was that Louis, mindful of Tourville's teaching and of his original protest against leaving Toulon, had authorised him to avoid an action with Russell. Tourville did not wait for a second word. Though Russell was still far away he immediately abandoned the blockade of Barcelona, and, regardless of his colleague ashore, he hurried his fleet back to Toulon. There was plenty of time, but he would risk nothing. The main point in his eyes that overrode all others was to preserve the fleet, and as he explained to Louis, in defence of his sudden abandonment of De Noailles, he wished to reach Toulon in time to get all his ships into its inmost basins, out of the reach of Russell's bomb-vessels before the British fleet appeared. He was convinced that when the waning of the summer should force Russell to begin his homeward voyage, there would still be time to complete the Catalonian campaign; and so it was that, when Russell entered the Straits, Tourville was hard at work with booms and batteries fortifying his fleet in Toulon.<sup>1</sup>

Barcelona was saved, at least for the time, and De Noailles's campaign, for which Louis had sacrificed operations everywhere else, was brought to a standstill. Still, thanks to Tourville's embarrassing caution, the

<sup>1</sup> The French despatches relating to these movements will be found in the appendix to Delarbré's *Tourville et la marine de son temps* and the *Memoirs of the Duc de Noailles*, *ubi supra*.

situation was difficult enough for Russell. A continuance of baffling weather prevented his reaching Barcelona before the end of July. It was already time to think of returning, and Russell was at a loss how to proceed. 'I wish,' he wrote to Shrewsbury from Barcelona on August 3, 'I was able to give any hopes of success in these seas as you desire, but the French will not let me see them and I dare not venture to attack them at Toulon. By what I can inform myself the place is too strong, and a mortification or repulse would be of very ill consequence. With probable hopes of success I would venture a great deal, but the time of year obliges me not to spend much time. . . . I long to be rid of this troublesome affair. I have neither head, body, nor temper to undergo all I do. Pray God bless you and send you all you wish and desire, and that I may have the good fortune to see you at Christmas.'

However distracting were the thoughts of the harassed admiral, there was fortunately one man who saw his way with heroic clearness. William was no man to do things by halves, and, though his admirals might falter, he himself was far from the end of his resolution. The failure at Brest and the impossibility of doing anything effective in Flanders determined him to cling at all hazards to the advantage and prestige he had gained in the Mediterranean, and towards the end of July the Council was startled by receiving from him a proposal that Russell should remain out all the winter. It was clear that if he was to winter in England he must return at once. The Mediterranean move would then sink to a mere demonstration. The moment Russell's back was turned, Tourville would put out again, and Barcelona must fall. As Shrewsbury, who was inclined to approve the idea, put the case in his answer to the King: 'The

reputation your arms have gained by being master of that sea will vanish with the loss of that town in the autumn.' It was at Cadiz, he argued, the fleet should winter, and thereby secure what we now call 'interior lines.' 'There,' Shrewsbury continued, 'they would be ready to act as you should command the next year, and be in such a place as they would certainly watch the motions of the French, [so] that in case they should send a squadron into the ocean to be stronger here, a squadron of like strength should be immediately despatched from Cadiz to reinforce us also.'

The difficulty, as William knew, would be to persuade the Council and Russell to adopt the suggestion loyally. To the Council the move would naturally appear as a sacrifice of the immediate interests of England to the Dutch King's far-reaching views of continental policy; while as for the admiral it was clear his heart was no longer in his work and that he was ripe to avail himself of any technical excuse to get home again as soon as possible. As it happened, this idea had already been put before him. It was obvious at the first glance to every one in the fleet, that Spain was in no condition to resist Louis's attack single-handed, and that, unless the fleet remained to command the sea, Barcelona would be taken, and its fall would probably be followed by the reduction of the Balearic islands. To prevent the French thus obtaining a firm hold in the western Mediterranean, 'a noble lord' in the fleet, whom we would gladly be able to identify, proposed to Russell that he should winter within the Straits. Naples, Messina, and Port Mahon were suggested, but Russell rejected them all. Naples was not well enough defended, Messina was too small, while at Port Mahon, the only possible station for so large a fleet, no provisions were to be had. But his

strongest objection was a strategical one, that 'should such a strength be absent from England and Holland all the winter, the French might make themselves too strong for us in the Channel.'<sup>1</sup>

That Cadiz met all these objections he perhaps did not care to see; but it is only fair to say that there was certainly much excuse for his view. Tourville at least shared it, and it was on the supposition that Russell could not stay that his strategy was based. Within a very few days of the subject being broached in the English Council it was known, like everything else, to Louis. Marlborough had betrayed the Brest design, and somebody took care to betray the new one. Tourville was warned, but he replied that in his opinion the English could not possibly intend to winter in the Mediterranean, though it must be said there is a ring of apprehension in his letter that belies his expressed confidence, and tells how the possibility had come upon him with a disturbing shock.<sup>2</sup>

From the Council, on whom William naturally wished to throw the heavy responsibility, he could get no definite opinion at all. In days when a serious error of judgment meant in all probability a trial for high treason—and few of them were quite clear of the taint—responsibility was a serious matter. First they summoned Rooke and his fellow Commissioners of the Admiralty to ask them

<sup>1</sup> Burchett, *Transactions at Sea, 1688-1697*, p. 243, published originally in 1703, and subsequently incorporated as Book iv. in the *Naval History*, 1720. In July 1694 he was named Joint Secretary to the Admiralty, and thus becomes a first-hand authority from this time onward. He was originally a servant of Pepys, and subsequently attached himself to Russell (*Dict. Nat. Biog. sub voce*). See also Gwyn to Harley, July 7, 1694, *Welbeck MSS.* iii. 551. 'I hear this poet Southerne is giving up the Secretaryship of the Admiralty, and that Bridgman and Admiral Russell's Birket (*sic*) are to be joint secretaries in his room.' The spelling is interesting as giving the contemporary pronunciation of Burchett's name.

<sup>2</sup> Delarbré, *Tourville*, Tourville to Louis, August 3 (n.s.), 1694.

whether they thought it possible to overhaul and revictual the fleet so far from home. But from the Admiralty they got no relief. The Commissioners promptly replied they could be ready to send out everything that was required for revictualling and careening the whole fleet in two months, and that there would be no difficulty about the operation provided Russell had full liberty of the Spanish ports; but they suggested that the Council should ask for the removal of the present Governor of Cadiz, who was suspected of French sympathies.<sup>1</sup> The ministers were thus forced to consider and give an opinion on the revolutionary proposal which William had laid upon them, and the report we have of their curious proceedings shows how heavily a movement which for us is a commonplace weighed on the spirits of the statesmen of that time.

Danby, now Marquis of Carmarthen and President of the Council, said it was too nice a point and refused to give an opinion either way; Lord Normanby was one day 'most clear and violent for the fleet's remaining' and the next as positive against it. Dorset and the Lord Steward stayed away. Shrewsbury and the rest, so far as they had not been cunning enough to conceal their opinions, were on the whole favourable, but insisted on the extreme danger of the fleet's having to depend on stores sent out across the Bay of Biscay in midwinter. If Russell could remain out till the next summer, Shrewsbury said he believed that the fleet in Toulon might be destroyed, and, even if that were impossible, the mere threat of retaining the command of the Mediterranean would probably incline the French to a reasonable peace during the winter. On one point only were they all agreed, and that was, 'that the decision ought to be left to Mr. Russell.' To make

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Committee of Council, *H.O. Admiralty*, vii. July 31, Aug. 1, ff. 74, 75.

sure no responsibility should in any case rest on themselves they begged that, whatever orders the King decided to give to Russell, he would send them under his own hand direct by way of Genoa.<sup>1</sup>

At such pusillanimous trifling, which was all the more marked from the candid way in which his own States General had supported his idea, the King was seriously annoyed; but still he did not shrink. 'I do not know,' he wrote on August 2, in answer to Shrewsbury's report, 'if I rightly comprehend, but it appears that the Committee are of opinion that Admiral Russell should winter at Cadiz, but dare not declare that opinion, through fear of being responsible for the event. I do wish that they had spoken more clearly on this occasion, and indeed they ought to have done, so as to prevent my being exposed to the supposition of acting solely from my own opinion. But as there is no time to deliberate, I am reduced to the necessity of coming to some determination, and I have accordingly resolved to order Admiral Russell to winter with his whole squadron at Cadiz. May God grant that this may succeed for the good of the kingdom and for the welfare of our allies.'

Even then the nervous ministers could not harden their hearts to send the admiral a positive order to remain, but, in concert with the Queen, framed one, which gave him considerable latitude to return if he thought proper.<sup>2</sup> It was more than the King could endure. He knew, as he told Shrewsbury, 'that wherever there is an unwillingness to do anything, reasons against it are easily found to prove that impossible which is not so in effect.' He made sure Russell would exercise the discretion allowed him by

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Committee of Council, Aug. 2, *H.O. Admiralty*, vii. 76. Trenchard to Russell, Aug. 4, *H.O. Admiralty*, v. 754. 'Yesterday,' he says, 'I received a copy of the orders he (the King) had sent.'

<sup>2</sup> Privy Council Minutes, Aug. 6, *Buccleuch MSS.* II. i. 111.

returning, and he was more than ever anxious for him to remain. He therefore sent him a peremptory order to stay, and even then could not be at rest. He poured out his heart to Heinsius, the famous Grand Pensionary of the Netherlands, to whose clear head and devotion both he and Marlborough owed so much of their success, telling him how anxious he was lest his order should not reach the fleet in time to stop it, since he was convinced that its wintering at Cadiz would prove the winning stroke of the game.<sup>1</sup> To Shrewsbury he wrote in the same strain of anxiety. 'I am under great alarms,' he said, 'lest Admiral Russell should not receive my order to continue in the Mediterranean, and the more I consider that affair the more important it appears to me. I know, from the best authority, there is nothing France so much dreads.' And finally, as a last precaution, he ordered a ship to be sent to meet Russell with orders that, even if he were already on his way home, he was to turn back.

So the momentous step was taken to adorn William's memory with one of its finest ornaments. It was he and he alone whose act it was, and his should be the undying credit. For the honour of his ungenerous ministers it must be said that, when he had once assumed the responsibility, they did all they could to support him. 'The letters,' wrote Shrewsbury to Russell, 'so soon as the first fiat had gone forth, 'which will come to you with this packet are of the greatest moment to yourself and England of any that perhaps ever came to your hand.' He urged him with friendly advice to remain at Cadiz, since, as he said, 'it will be very glorious to interrupt all the King of France designs this autumn in the Mediterranean, and ride the next summer master of both seas as you have done this.' He feared, so unprecedented was the order,

<sup>1</sup> De Jonge, *Nederlandsche Zeevezen*, iv. i. 527, note, August 19-29.

that Russell's unruly temper would tempt him to disobey, and he warned him that, though his Majesty had gone beyond any advice the council had given, yet in his high determination the feeling of the country was with him. Presently he fell to coaxing. 'Though by your letter of the 3rd,' he wrote on August 26, 'I find you are not in a very good humour, I doubt the orders you have received since will put you in a worse. The doctrine you used to preach to me that public good ought to be considered before private ease will now come to your share to practise in a more tedious and troublesome manner than you could foresee. . . . Dear Mr. Russell, let a man who truly loves and values you prevail on you to practise submission and patience.'

Russell was wise enough to take his friend's good advice, but he consoled himself with an exaggerated pose of martyrdom, natural enough when men were accustomed to leave the seat of war each year to enjoy the winter season in London, but almost ludicrous when we remember the long vigils of Nelson and Collingwood or the service that men blithely endure to-day. 'Really,' he replied to his friend, 'I am so surprised at receiving the King's positive commands to winter with the fleet at Cadiz that I do not know whether serving six months, as I have done, a-shipboard and six months to be at Cadiz, and six months more a-shipboard, it be not better to put an end to a troublesome life as I have made it.' He expressed himself wholly opposed to the King's strategy and was certain that, if the French chose to send a squadron round to Brest, his fleet would be in no condition to oppose them. He was in despair, but resigned. 'I concluded what would be the event,' he laments, 'well knowing the King's passionate desire to have ships in these seas, without considering how reasonable it may prove

to the other services. He fancies the defects of a ship are as easily repaired as mending a bridle or stirrup leather.'

It must not be supposed, however, that in spite of his lamentations Russell did not loyally carry out his orders. When they reached him he was already on his way home. Seeing the hopeless condition of the Spanish army and the limited time at his disposal, he had found it impossible to assist the Spanish commander-in-chief in any of his proposals for the recovery of the ground which De Noailles had won, and towards the end of August he found the state of his stores made it imperative that he should move down to repass the Straits. Neither of the orders which William had sent overland through Genoa had reached him. Both had been intercepted by French cruisers between Genoa and Marseilles, and so sure was Tourville that Russell could not dare to remain out all the winter that he believed the orders were meant to be intercepted as a ruse of William's to deceive him.<sup>1</sup> So Russell had sailed with the pleasant prospect of a winter season in London, and he had reached as far as Malaga, ready to pass out of the Straits, before he was disillusioned. There the vessel sent to intercept him met the fleet, and he received under 'the sign manual and royal signet' William's peremptory commands.<sup>2</sup>

The effect upon him we have already seen in his letter to Shrewsbury. To the Secretary of the Council he expressed himself no less pathetically. To do him justice his first complaint was that he had not been told in time, so that he might have stayed longer off Catalonia and effected something against the French. In his mortification he then suggested he should be relieved. The strain

<sup>1</sup> Delarbré, *Tourville*, *Appendix*, Sept. 6-16.

<sup>2</sup> The order was dated Aug. 7, *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 70.

was too great for him. 'Could I have imagined,' he wrote, 'this expedition would have been detained here so long, I would much rather have chosen to live on bread and water. . . . The business of the conducting part is so terrible . . . that I am at present under a doubt with myself whether it is not better to die.' Still he did not flinch from the task laid upon him. He immediately called a council of war. Callenburgh was for carrying on to Cadiz there and then; but Russell says he thought the idea 'so preposterous a proceeding' that he persuaded him to go back at least as high as Alicante. He himself was for going to Minorca, but the Dutch officers would not go without the stores they were expecting. So it was settled, Russell declaring he did not mean to go to Cadiz till October, unless he was sure the French had disarmed their fleet.<sup>1</sup>

The intention of his movement back to the Balearic islands was to foil an expected attempt by Tourville to slip past him out of the Straits, and to this end he forthwith detached Nevell with a squadron of ten sail to cruise between Formentara and the African coast, and at the same time sent away intelligence vessels to Minorca, Oran, and Tetuan to make sure the French should not escape his cruising squadron undetected. Before, however, he himself could do anything with the main body of the fleet he was struck down by dysentery and had to go ashore at Alicante. He had just strength left, he says, to sign an order to his vice-admiral, Aylmer, to take command of the fleet and do whatever the council of war decided.<sup>2</sup> It was resolved to join Nevell at once with the bulk of the fleet and to fight or pursue any French ships they found at sea. In this posture the fleet was kept till Russell was

<sup>1</sup> Russell to Trenchard, Malaga, September 5, *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 924.

<sup>2</sup> Russell to Trenchard, Alicante, September 21, *ibid.* 1056.

recovered. By that time his intelligence and the advanced season made it fairly certain that the French were fixed at Toulon for the winter, and accordingly in the first week in October, as he had intended, he carried the whole fleet round to Cadiz.<sup>1</sup>

Even then Russell was not left in peace. Louis, habituated to unhalting success, was exasperated with the failure of his campaign, and directly it was known that the allied fleet had left the Mediterranean he began pressing the Duc de Noailles and Tourville with desperate orders to renew the attempt at Barcelona. Unpaid and inactive, Noailles's army had become hopelessly demoralised by plunder, and he protested that, even if they were fit to march, unless the fleet could support them, the move would only be sending them to destruction. Tourville no less energetically represented the unwisdom of exposing the fleet in any such hazardous attempt. Still the effect of Louis's pressure was continual alarms from Barcelona that Noailles was moving and Tourville at sea. In spite of the excitement of the Spanish officials, Russell refused to believe the rumours, but nevertheless held the bulk of the fleet in constant readiness to re-enter the Straits. It is said that Tourville actually sailed from Toulon in October with a large body of troops for Barcelona, but was promptly recalled again on news that Russell was coming

<sup>1</sup> Burchett, who was Russell's secretary, says Aylmer was ordered out for a week, and returned to Alicante, September 10, which would imply that Russell left the sea open during all the rest of September. Burchett's date however is clearly a misreading. Russell did not acknowledge William's orders at Malaga till September 7-17, and did not announce his illness at Alicante and Aylmer's sailing till the 21st. Burchett also had dysentery and went ashore with his chief. Byng says Nevell was detached on September 10 and that Aylmer started for his cruise on the 13th, was joined by Nevell on the 22nd, and returned on the 23rd, *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 70.

back.<sup>1</sup> After that there was no sign of movement. Keeping a squadron of cruisers always in the Straits and the bulk of his fleet in continual readiness for sea, Russell set to work to refit piecemeal for the next year's campaign, and winter settled down to seal William's triumphant move.

The effect had been extraordinary. While William had been able to score his first success in Flanders by the capture of Huy, the French had made no progress in Italy, and the Duke of Savoy had held firm to the Allies. Noailles's army never recovered the demoralisation of its inactivity. Degenerating more and more in their efforts to support themselves by marauding, they fell into excesses which brought upon them all the terrors of a guerilla war, and the exasperated Catalans, of whom Louis had hoped to make loyal subjects, were driven to fierce and successful retaliation. At Toulon things were little better. Its resources were not equal to refitting the whole fleet, and the only hope of breaking William's hold on the Mediterranean was to commission the first and second rates that had been laid up in Brest, and man them from Tourville's spent ships. Large numbers of seamen were sent for the purpose overland to Brest. On the way they deserted in hundreds; they could never be gathered again, and Louis's fleet never recovered the blow. And all this was directly the result of an enemy dominating the Mediterranean and keeping a fleet interposed between the two seats of the French maritime power.

The effect on Louis's prestige was even more severe. His career of conquest was checked, the panic in Spain

*Memoirs of De Noailles*, p. 395. Russell believed it was a design to draw him from Cadiz and permit Tourville to escape. Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, 209.

allayed, and the wisest diplomatists in Europe began to be sensible of a new development in international politics in what the Venetian Ambassador at Madrid called 'the unprecedented and grand resolve to place and maintain the fleet at the Straits.'<sup>1</sup> In England it was thoroughly appreciated. 'The resolution,' wrote Shrewsbury to Russell, 'of the fleet's wintering at Cadiz was not only met with general applause in Christendom and extremely disappointed the French designs, but it is approved here by almost all sorts of people, as the only step that has been made by us this war that looks like a vigour and a mind to put an end to it. . . . I cannot think but that you are at this time in much the considerablest station of any subject in Europe.'<sup>2</sup> After a full inquiry into the conduct of the war at sea, the House of Lords voted their thanks to Russell, and a resolution was also carried approving the King's strategy and begging him to increase his fleet so as to enable him to keep a force superior to that of the enemy permanently in the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup>

Everything was expected from the coming campaign. Rooke and his brother Commissioners were as good as their word, and sent out all the stores, artificers, and officials that were necessary to turn Cadiz into a British navy yard. The whole 'terrible business of the conducting part' was taken off the admiral's hands and he had leisure to think. The result was a clear warning to the Government that the expected success depended

<sup>1</sup> 'L' insolita e grande risoluzione di mettere e fermar la flota allo Stretto serve a raddolcire gli animi,' &c. *Relazioni Venete, Spagna*, ii. 597.

<sup>2</sup> This, no doubt, was partly in answer to Russell's request for a commission as general, 'for admiral in Spain,' he complained, 'is squire in England, so insignificant a name is it in these parts. It is not a new thing. Lord Sandwich, Black Dean, and several others had it,' Coxe, 209. The commission was granted him, *ibid.* 224.

<sup>3</sup> *Lords Journals*, xv. 511.

entirely on his being able to bring the French to action and defeating them. If Tourville refused to put to sea, the situation of the past year would recur. At the end of July he would have to turn homeward and leave the Mediterranean open to the operations of the Toulon squadron. He therefore urged that the Channel division of the main fleet should be given sealed orders to be opened towards the end of summer, directing it to proceed to Cadiz. At the same time his own fleet would slip away, and, before the French could know what was going on, the fresh force would have changed places with the stale one. In this way the situation might be held for a second winter, and, unless it was so held, there was no certain hope of success. In reply he was told the King generally approved his plan, though, as his own division of the main fleet was so much larger than that he had left behind, it would be impossible to replace the whole of it, and some of the ships would have to remain. In any case it was the King's flattering desire that he himself should continue in command. Russell excused himself on the ground of his health, and then set to work to show his zeal.

By April, though he had kept squadrons out even far up the Straits all the winter, the whole fleet was ready for sea. Some eighteen sail he had sent home by the King's orders. In their place he had asked for some bomb-vessels as well as three regiments of foot, and one of the new marines to fill up his complements and furnish a landing force. These had now arrived, and on May 2 he put to sea with forty-five of the line, Dutch and English. The meaning of the new additions to his force was that he meant to break the deadlock by striking a direct blow against Toulon or Marseilles. By that device he hoped to drive Tourville out of his astute strategy and compel him to fight. In order to keep his own

troops for the operation his first object was to fetch a Spanish force, which had assembled at Finale, near Genoa, to secure Catalonia against the remnants of De Noailles's army.

Accordingly, after showing himself at Barcelona and communicating with the Spanish Viceroy, he passed on to the eastward. The trouble was that the practicability of Russell's design depended wholly on the possibility of inducing the Duke of Savoy to co-operate. British interests at Turin, his capital, were in the hands of the famous Massue de Ruvigny, Deputy-General of the Huguenots, one of the many valuable subjects whom the revocation of the edict of Nantes had given to William. His mother was a Russell, and he was now a British subject and Earl of Galway for his services as a general of horse in Ireland. In Savoy he commanded the subsidised contingent and was also Envoy Extraordinary. To him Russell now addressed a letter to inquire if there was any hope of inducing the artful prince to co-operate with him in his grand design. Having looked into Toulon and found all quiet, he was content to despatch Nevell with a small squadron to deliver his letters and fetch the troops from Finale, giving him a rendezvous at Hyères. In the interval he despatched Admiral Mitchell with the chief military officers and Sir Martin Beckman, of Tangier fame and now one of the leading British engineers, to make a close reconnaissance of the Toulon defences.<sup>1</sup> Then his plans were suddenly upset. A gale sprang up, which blew for three days and nights, and drove him clean off the coast; and by the time he was able to get back to cover the passage of the Finale transports past Toulon he

<sup>1</sup> In *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 73, it is said they were sent 'to view Marseilles.' Burchett says Toulon.

had to run to Sardinia for water and to protect the homeward-bound Smyrna fleet.

Before he was again ready for action, Casale, the immediate objective of the operations of the Duke of Savoy and his Imperial allies, had fallen. With scarcely a show of resistance it had suddenly capitulated—so suddenly indeed that Galway suspected all was not right. The astute Duke was clever enough, however, to allay all suspicion, and no one could yet tell what was in the wind. As a matter of fact Louis had recognised that William's move in the Mediterranean had beaten him, and the sacrifice of Casale was the first step in a new opening to detach Savoy from the League and remove Italy from the board. Ignorant of all this subtilty, Russell only saw in the allies' success fresh hope of carrying off his great combined move against Toulon, and so finally crushing the French sea power in the Mediterranean. Having seen the Smyrna convoy safe for Alicante, he proceeded with his fleet to Barcelona. It was here, about the middle of July, that he heard the news of Savoy's success, and he was about to sail for the coast of Provence in high expectation when letters reached him from home that again raised his ugly temper to boiling point.

William had once more taken a high hand with the navy. Disregarding Russell's plan, or knowing perhaps that it was now impracticable, he had bluntly decided that he must remain in the Mediterranean till the autumn. For the King it was the only way in which Tourville's defensive strategy could be met. All he did to meet the seamen's objections, was to say that if a few of the ships were unfit to keep the sea so late, they might be sent home, and Rooke must replace them. In vain the ministers protested, and, fortified with Rooke's

opinion, urged that by that time the condition of the ships would be such as to render them unfit to face equinoctial weather. 'Not one but every seaman,' Shrewsbury wrote to the King, 'that any of us have discoursed with, do not only say the hazard is very great, but almost certain; that ships of the first or second rate have not till very lately been ventured to those seas, and if they are to return in the winter, Sir George Rooke's expression to me was, "It is a thousand to one several of them miscarry."' The King would not listen. Having failed to penetrate the French lines in Flanders, he had just made his bold move on Namur, and had sat down before the place in form. The risk he was taking must have made those which he was forcing on Russell seem light, and the orders went forward as he had resolved.

On receipt of them Russell delivered his temper once more in a letter to his friend at Court. After representing the madness of his orders he fell to abusing the Dutch squadron, which was never up to strength and always short of victuals, and roundly accused the King of being under the thumb of the Admiralty of Amsterdam. He begged sarcastically to be informed at least what force was coming in September and who was to command it. 'For at present,' he said, 'I know nothing but that after that month I may be drowned in coming home.' The end he hinted would probably be another order that he himself was to stay out, and if it came he plainly said he should disobey it. This letter he had the recklessness to send through France, regardless in his temper of the possibility of its being intercepted. As a matter of fact it reached the King's camp in Flanders, and William opened it, but there is no trace of his ever having visited the indiscretion, if it was no worse, on his testy servant's head.

Again, having vented his spleen, Russell obeyed, and still further reduced his force by sending home his most defective ships as convoy for the Smyrna fleet. The only consolation for the angry admiral was that there was still hope of solving the situation by a stroke against Toulon or Marseilles in concert with the troops of Savoy, if only he could induce the Viceroy of Catalonia to lend him his squadron of twelve galleys.<sup>1</sup> On this exploit his heart was still set; but to add to his irritation the Viceroy met his application for the galleys by an application that he would first assist him in recovering Palamos. Seeing what his instructions were, and how badly he wanted the galleys, he could scarcely refuse. But, as the Spaniards had no material for a siege, he thought himself justified in stipulating that his troops should be landed for a week only, and not so long if danger threatened from Toulon in the meantime. Early in August therefore the troops were landed at Palamos, and a vessel sent to watch Toulon. Combined operations were opened immediately, and were meeting with unexpected success, when Russell's advice boat returned with two prisoners who asserted that at Toulon sixty sail of the line were lying in the road ready for sea. At the same time five fresh Dutch ships joined from Cadiz. Russell insisted on immediately re-embarking his troops, and, advising the Spaniards to return to their previous position, he sailed off in search of the French. He was in high hope that he had gained his end. He thought that the news of his having sent home his unseaworthy ships must have induced the French to come out and fight; but the intelligence was false. At Toulon, it is true, he found indications that the ships were being prepared for sea, but, after hanging as close in to the port as the weather would let him, he made certain

<sup>1</sup> *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 74.

they had no more intention of fighting him than before. As for his darling project of an attack upon the place in force, he had now to learn there was no hope of help from Savoy, and for his own force it was far too strong. In any case September on that coast was no place for such a fleet as his, and he once more retired to his original station at Alicante.

He had heard that Sir George Rooke was coming out with some fresh ships to relieve him, and it had been his intention to stay where he was till the end of the month in pursuance of the King's desire, or at least till he heard Rooke was at Cadiz. But Callenburgh considered that so long a delay at Alicante was incompatible with his own orders to return before the Dutch ports became icebound; whereupon Russell resolved to go home at once with all the first and second rates in accordance with William's instructions, leaving his rear-admiral, Sir David Mitchell, in command of the rest with orders to establish himself at Cadiz, and from there do all he could to protect the trade and embarrass the French.

So ended the two campaigns—the type of so many that were to succeed them. How often were their main features to recur! The French fleet helpless in Toulon—not blockaded, but refusing to stir; the fitful operations on the Spanish coast hampering in greater or less degree the military operations of the French army; the fruitless efforts to achieve something on the coast of Provence by the help of preoccupied or faint-hearted allies. Nor was this the whole. As always, beneath the apparent failures and disappointments there was still, unseen and almost unnoticed, the silent pressure of the chafing fleet that was felt to the farthest borders of the war, even to the far-off Meuse, withering the lilies on the walls of Namur.

In truth, Russell's fleet had been eating into the roots of France, and William showed no sign of loosing his hold. Sir George Rooke reached Cadiz after a tempestuous voyage of five weeks in the middle of October, and with Mitchell's and the Dutch squadron could show a force of thirty ships of the line, besides bomb-vessels and others. It was of course insufficient to deal with the Toulon fleet, but reinforcements were being brought forward in England which were to join his flag during the winter for an early campaign in the spring. Louis saw himself threatened with a continuance of the exhausting situation. At all costs the tension must be broken, and he set to work to effect it in his grand manner with one of those broad strokes that are the fascination of his epoch. A century later the greatest of his successors found himself forced by the same pressure to attempt the invasion of England. In this Napoleon was but repeating Louis's expedient. In mid-winter, while the bulk of the British fleet was in harbour, a force was rapidly concentrated at Calais, where James joined it, prepared to throw himself across while the seas were clear, and put himself at the head of all that was Jacobite and reactionary in his lost kingdom. The design promised all success. It happened however that a continuance of westerly winds had prevented the sailing of the last division of the Mediterranean fleet. It was at once ordered to the Downs with every available ship that could be got out of harbour. Russell in person went down to command, and Rooke was recalled. The situation in the Narrow Seas was saved, but that in the Mediterranean was lost. James returned to his hopeless exile, and the Toulon fleet put to sea. Every effort was made to prevent its getting into Brest, and although after many delays Rooke early in May was able to get off Ushant with a sufficient fleet, he was just too late.

Château-Rénault was safe in Brest, and William's Mediterranean venture came to an end.

The financial crisis through which England was passing made it impossible to renew the strategy which had promised so well. Still its effects continued. The dislocation of French finance and of the naval administration which had been caused by William's two years' command of the Mediterranean left its mark. Though the fleet was concentrated at Brest, it was in no condition to effect anything, nor for the rest of the war did French action rise above commerce destruction and colonial raids. Every one except Spain, whose impotence had been the cause of all the trouble, was anxious for peace. The absurd pretensions of the Court of Madrid were the main obstacle to its conclusion, and, even had William been able, he was certainly unwilling to support her unreasonable attitude by again sending his fleet to the Straits.

In any case the necessity of withdrawing the fleet had been followed by events which made peace inevitable, and at the same time marked with fresh emphasis what the command of the Mediterranean meant in European affairs. If it be thought that too much weight has been adjudged to William's great move, the rebound which came immediately the pressure was removed should certainly justify what has been claimed. It was in Italy the most convincing effect is seen. 'The measure,' wrote the despairing Galway to Shrewsbury, 'which the King finds it necessary to adopt of recalling his fleet is a misfortune to our affairs in general, as the French are thus relieved from the greatest embarrassment which they have hitherto experienced.' And again, 'My lord, permit me to represent to you that the most important affair is to think of the fleet which the King would have in the Mediterranean.' And yet again, when the danger in

the Channel was over: 'I am glad, my lord, that you are well convinced of the necessity of having a fleet in the Mediterranean, and I am thence induced to hope that the King will send one. The enemy have laid up the squadron which sailed from Toulon to Brest with the exception of twelve ships. So no more than twenty-five or thirty of these ships are left in the ocean in three squadrons. Why then do we keep in your seas a fleet of eighty sail and not send a squadron of twenty-five or thirty into the Mediterranean? If it should please his Majesty to order on board only two battalions, he will divert a force of the enemy equal to twenty thousand men, and change in his favour the aspect of affairs in all this country and all Italy.'

No clearer exposition of the true lines of British strategy could be desired; but it was not to be. The Duke of Savoy, while he had the effrontery to beg for the return of the fleet, was making separate terms for himself. The surrender of Casale proved to be the firstfruits of an accommodation, by which Savoy deserted the alliance and Louis secured from Spain and the Empire the neutralisation of Italy. In view of the military impotence of the Spanish King at home, this pusillanimous arrangement was no less than a complete abandonment of the position in the Mediterranean. It was in forcing that position that William had come to see his only hope of bringing the war to a successful issue. It is small wonder then that his patience broke down. With such allies it was impossible to work, and when Louis adroitly seized the moment to offer honourable terms of peace, William insisted on their consideration. A congress, after interminable delay, assembled at Ryswick, near the Hague, but it was only to be the scene of every kind of obstruction that the pride and folly of the Hapsburgs could suggest,

and the pedantic diplomacy of the time invent. Still obstruction availed the malcontents nothing. William with his fleets was master of the situation, and, driven to exasperation, he resolved to take the matter into his own hands.

A little wayside diplomacy between Lord Portland and Marshal Boufflers behind the back of the Congress quickly settled a give-and-take line for a firm peace. It amounted roughly to the *status quo ante bellum*, with the substantial addition that Louis recognised his arch-enemy as King of England. The malcontents, who had set the example of private arrangements with the common enemy, were naturally furious at seeing the tables turned. Spain, who had the least right to complain, was the loudest in her vituperation; but the mere threat that, if the war continued, no fleet from the North would again appear in the Mediterranean forced her to acquiesce. Deprived of the protection at sea which William had refused to continue, Barcelona had already fallen. At the same time came news that on the Spanish Main Cartagena had been sacked by a French squadron under Pointis, and Spain, for all her overweening pretensions, could be under no hallucination as to what a continuance of the war would mean for her without the goodwill of the sea powers. She had no choice but to lower her note, and on September 20, 1697, peace was signed at Ryswick on the lines which William had arranged with Louis.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

THOUGH the Congress of Ryswick gave peace to Europe, it was far from staying the struggle for the Mediterranean. It simply transferred the contest from the sea to the cabinets. The nightmare of the Spanish succession still hung over Europe. The childless King of Spain, in ever failing health, still lingered on, and any day the news of his death might blow into flame the embers which the peace had merely covered over. Every power, oppressed almost to exhaustion with financial embarrassment and the dislocation of trade, was pining for rest, and none more than France. The only possible escape from the intolerable situation was to arrange it diplomatically while the King of Spain yet lived. No sooner therefore was the peace signed than Louis set to work, and the result was the famous negotiations for the 'Partition Treaties,' which form perhaps the most extraordinary chapter in diplomatic history.

With the failure of the male line of the Spanish Hapsburgs, three claimants could show a title on the distaff side—the Dauphin, the eldest son of the Emperor, and the Electoral Prince, son of the Elector of Bavaria. The real struggle lay of course between France and Austria, who alone could hope to assert their claim to the undivided succession; but both Bourbon and Hapsburg had to face the fact that Europe would not sit down

quietly while either house added the vast dominions of Spain to the possessions that already made each so formidable. Before either could hope to enjoy its prospective rights in peace, Europe must be satisfied, and since the late war Europe for this purpose meant William. To him therefore Louis had deferentially to apply, and to beg him to say how it would please him to arrange the balance of European power.

The crux of the whole question, as it had always been in the rivalry between France and the Empire, was the command of the Mediterranean. The possession of the Spanish crown meant also of course the possession of the Spanish Indies, but it is impossible to read the correspondence of the time without seeing that this was the minor consideration. The real and recognised value of the Peninsula was that, as the powers were then ordered, it would give to its possessor the dominant place in the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean, as William had so clearly demonstrated, was the keyboard of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, since William's recent demonstration of his power and determination to play upon it, the first necessity was to come to terms with him if the vacant succession was not to prove a bed of thorns. And at every turn of the negotiations we see that it was the freedom of the Mediterranean that was uppermost in William's mind. With Cadiz in French hands the Straits were in their hands, and his power of dividing the two seats of their maritime power was gone. Cadiz in the late war had acquired a new strategical coefficient that had never been quite clearly recognised before. Its former importance was mainly that it was the seat

<sup>1</sup> Grimblot, *Letters of William III. and Louis XIV. and of their Ministers, 1697-1700.*

of the American trade of Spain and of her Oceanic sea power. But since William had had the use of it, he had demonstrated its higher value to be that it commanded the Straits. As no first-class naval port then existed in the Straits themselves, it stood in fact for what Gibraltar stands for to-day. Unless therefore William had the liberty of it, or of an equivalent, it would be impossible for him in a future struggle to repeat the masterly stroke which had brought home to Louis the length of his arm. In the negotiations all this was of course expressed in terms of trade—it was for the freedom of his Mediterranean trade that William evinced his main anxiety—but behind it, and scarcely disguised, was the higher strategy of war.

Louis's overtures began by pointing out the extreme danger of reviving the domination of Charles V. if the Spanish dominions and the Empire were to become reunited in the Austrian Hapsburgs. To avoid such an accumulation of territory round one throne, he was prepared, if William supported the Bourbon claim, to settle the Spanish crown on the Dauphin's second son, and so secure its separation from that of France. As a further security for the trade of the maritime powers, he would be prepared to cede to William Ceuta and Oran, the remaining Spanish possessions on the African coast, for the benefit of England and Holland. To this William would not listen. He protested he had nothing to fear from Austria upon the sea, however great her empire, but that so large an addition to the French sea power as was proposed was a danger not to be borne. If Louis wished to negotiate with a view to sharing the vast inheritance, it must be on the basis of a partition between the three claimants, which would make none of them predominant. By way of a counter proposal therefore

he introduced the Prince of Bavaria, the third claimant, and proposed, after various interchanges of views, that to him should go Spain and the Indies, while Louis's grandson contented himself with Naples and the Italian islands, and while Milan, Sardinia, and the Netherlands went to the Archduke Charles, the second son of the Emperor; or, in the alternative, if Louis had set his heart on Spain and the Indies, then Italy and the Netherlands must be divided between the Electoral Prince and the Archduke; but in this case—if, that is, Spain and the Indies went to a French prince—then England must insist on a guarantee for the freedom of the Mediterranean, not only by the cession of Ceuta and Oran, but also of one or two really serviceable ports within the Straits.

Louis was now more than ever disturbed. In the arrangement which William had proposed he had said nothing about Sicily, and at Paris it was feared that he would demand the island France had coveted so long, and if not the whole, at least its naval centre, Messina. But the fact was that both Louis and William were secretly oppressed with their own internal difficulties, and were overrating each other's strength. William had really little hope of bringing Louis to any reasonable terms, or of inducing his war-weary subjects to permit him a display of force. He had no faith in negotiations that were not carried on sword in hand, and, in face of the growing anti-military spirit in England, all he could do to whet his diplomacy was to increase the usual Mediterranean squadron and beg the Dutch to do the same. The effect of the expedient was necessarily to enhance the importance of the Mediterranean demands and increase still further Louis's anxiety. Eventually William declared that the place he had in

his mind within the Straits was Minorca. Portland, his ambassador in Paris, also mentioned Gibraltar, but in spite of his urgent advice William would not insist on it, thereby again displaying his remarkable strategical insight. For there is no doubt that, so long as England held Minorca, the extra advantage of Gibraltar was certainly not worth the cost and bad blood its occupation must entail. Louis, misunderstanding his opponent's apparent moderation, now took a higher tone, and declared nothing would induce him to cede a port within the Straits, since such a concession would give the mastery to the maritime power. William, in his quiet way, immediately hardened down. His irreducible minimum was the power of keeping a fleet permanently in the Mediterranean, and without Minorca or some other Spanish port it was impossible for his fleet to winter there. 7

In every word he wrote we see his firm grasp of the controlling factors in European politics which he had discovered, and his far-sighted appreciation of what the late war had taught. Louis, as wise as he, resisted with all his diplomatic force, but he resisted in vain. In vain he suggested that, if William were bent on a port within the Straits, he might in apportioning Southern Italy reserve one for himself out of the Archduke's share. William would not recede an inch from the position he had taken up. He told Portland that he absolutely refused to treat at all for Louis's possession of Spain, except on the basis of the cession of Port Mahon. Then, when a renewal of the war began to look inevitable, Louis gave way. Rather than give William a footing in the Mediterranean he decided to abandon to the Electoral Prince his claim to Spain and the Indies, and to content himself with the alternative arrangement, which would give him the control of Italy. One effort he made

to improve the exchange, by proposing that Milan should go to Savoy instead of to the Emperor. This idea was of course that the pliant Prince should give Savoy to France in exchange for Milan, and then Louis would control almost the whole coast of the Mediterranean from Sicily to the Pyrenees. William treated the suggestion almost as an impertinence. So incensed was he with the Duke of Savoy for the treacherous desertion which had robbed Russell's great move of complete success, that he would not permit his name to be mentioned, and Louis had to content himself with the original proposal.

Still it was much that he gained—all indeed or nearly all that France had been striving for since Mazarin's day. For besides Naples and Sicily he was to have Orbitello and the other Spanish ports on the Tuscan coasts, Elba and the adjacent islands over which so much blood had been shed, and the port and marquisate of Finale, while in return for concessions elsewhere he was also to have Guipuscoa with its famous ports of Passages and St. Sebastian. The latter concession of course in no way affected the situation within the Straits, except for the increase it gave to French naval resources. No division could well have been fairer. France gained at least half the Spanish sea power with a substantial strengthening of her position both within and without the Straits, while at the same time she gained nothing by which, as she had hoped, the Western Mediterranean would be constituted a French lake. William had resolutely kept the gate open, and held France back from the Spanish sphere.

The main interest of it all is as a step in the gradual solidification of the naval policy which William inaugurated. Its effect was not seen till the war was

renewed. The treaty itself never came into operation. When all had been settled it was not the King of Spain that died, but the young Electoral Prince. The succession thus lay entirely between France and Austria, and William's well-framed edifice fell to the ground. Everything had to begin again from the foundations. A whole year's negotiations followed before the second partition treaty was signed; but throughout all their shifting phases Louis never once made any proposal which could give William a loophole for claiming a port in the Mediterranean. Further than this the negotiations and the final terms of the treaty do not concern us. They were indeed a mere pretence that covered the determined efforts of France and Austria to secure the whole succession by intrigue at the Court of Madrid. It was Louis who won the unsavoury game. When at last, in November 1700, the King of Spain died, it was found he had bequeathed the whole of his empire to the second son of the Dauphin, Philip Duke of Anjou.

With this fatal catastrophe the bloodstained century came to an end. So terrible was the prospect to all Europe, and so weary was the world of war, that the inevitable struggle did not at once break out. Every one shrank from striking the first blow and was absorbed in securing the strategical points with which he was most concerned. The main causes of anxiety were, firstly, the 'Barrier Fortresses' along Louis's northern frontier, which since the peace of Ryswick had been garrisoned by Dutch troops so as to secure the Spanish Netherlands as a real 'buffer state' between France and Holland; secondly, the Duchy of Milan, which gave to its possessor the command of North Italy; and finally the entrance to the Mediterranean. The naval importance of the ports in the first two areas was a tradition in European politics.

That of the third was new, and the unprecedented weight attached to it reveals the impression which William's strategy had made.

No sooner had Louis declared his intention of accepting the fatal will than he begged the Junta of Regency to take steps to secure and strengthen their ports, especially Cadiz, Port Mahon, and Gibraltar, and officers were immediately despatched for that purpose. The resident agents of the Protestant powers at once spread the alarm. 'What will become of the Protestant religion,' wrote a correspondent of the Elector of Hanover, 'and what will become of the commerce of the English and Dutch . . . if he [the King of France] has Gibraltar fortified and keeps a strong garrison there with a good squadron of galleys and ships of war? If once he is in possession of this port, it will not be difficult to seize Tangier, on which to all appearance he has had his eye for a long time past. Then, monseigneur, the Straits will be indeed closed, and what effort and cost will not England and Holland be put to to open it! . . . Would to God there were in Spain five or six of the most discreet and enlightened members of the House of Commons!'<sup>1</sup>

His lament was well justified. Ever since the peace of Ryswick Parliament had been doing its best to thwart William's far-sighted efforts to fortify the country against the coming danger. As the means he had taken to that end became known, the hostility of the nation increased. The partition treaty had been received with something

<sup>1</sup> *Buccleuch MSS.* i. 357. The document is undated, but assigned in a note to '1701 or after.' It was certainly not after, but perhaps before. The Junta of Regency to which it refers was in power only from November 1, 1700, to February 18, 1701. It is also stated to have been written 'some weeks' after it was known in Spain that Louis had accepted the will, which would give its date about the latter part of December 1700, or at latest the early part of January 1701.

like an outburst of indignation. The King of Spain was not yet dead when it became known, and public utterance took the high moral line that it was little short of highway robbery thus to divide the possessions of an ally. Beneath this cry William believed that he could detect its real grounds. He put it down to the ever increasing sensitiveness of the country about its Mediterranean trade. He was probably not far from right in believing that the opposition to his work arose from the fact that France was to have Naples and Sicily, so that, as the Levant merchants said, they would have thenceforth to go to the French Court for license to trade. He had therefore set to work to remove the difficulty by arranging an exchange whereby Louis should take Savoy and its North Italian territories, and the Duke of Savoy Naples and Sicily.<sup>1</sup> Louis appeared to favour the idea, but, before anything was done, Parliament met in the worst of tempers. At the very hour when the King of Spain lay dying, they had been busy forcing William to disband his army, and had left him powerless to face Louis with effect in the late negotiations. The failure of those negotiations, which was mainly due to their own want of sense, they visited on the King's head, and he in disgust had come to contemplate retiring to Holland and leaving them for ever. But suddenly a strong revulsion of feeling set in. Early in February 1701 Louis by a sudden move surprised the Dutch garrisons in the Barrier Fortresses and was in practical occupation of the Spanish Netherlands. Parliament was in the act of reassembling. It met with the sound of the occupation in its ears. It was a sound which, in its traditional jealousy for the North Sea ports, Parliament could not fail to understand. At the same time, to leave no room for doubt, a new French project for

<sup>1</sup> *Grimblot*, vol. ii.

keeping England busy with a Stuart invasion was disclosed, and the country's foolish mistrust of its sovereign was laid bare. The Commons promptly passed a vote of confidence in the King, and in a burst of repentance he was given *carte blanche* to negotiate a new Grand Alliance.

William was at once himself again. He asked and obtained an increase in the fleet, and made overtures for the restoration of the Barrier Fortresses. The French refused to treat, and Rooke, who through all the shifts of party politics still remained William's most trusted naval officer, was named Commander-in-Chief. Fire-breathing petitions came up from the country, and by June Parliament was unanimous for war in support of Holland and the Empire. Negotiations began at the Hague for a renewal of the Grand Alliance, and in July William, whose strength was fast failing, went over to Loo to watch them and to rest, after leaving all prepared for an outbreak of war. Indeed peace barely existed. Ten thousand British troops were already in Holland under Marlborough's command. An Imperial army under Prince Eugene of Savoy, fresh from his triumphant campaign against the Turks, had entered Northern Italy to forestall the French, and a French army under the veteran Marshal Catinat was in motion to turn them out. In Brest Château-Rénault had ready for sea a squadron which was supposed to be under orders to take possession of the Plate fleet; and, as William passed over to Holland, Rooke received his final instructions.<sup>1</sup>

A powerful Anglo-Dutch fleet was gathering at Spithead, and with this Rooke was to make a demonstration

<sup>1</sup> *Rooke's Journal* (Navy Records Society), p. 120. The exact nature of these instructions is not known, but their tenor may be gathered from Rooke's remarks about them, *ibid.* pp. 122-123, 125, 130, 132, 135.

before Cadiz with the intention apparently of emphasising William's arguments in his characteristic manner, and even of preventing the occupation of the harbour by a French squadron. It was a threat at once to the Spanish American trade and to the French position in the Mediterranean—a spring straight at the key of the naval situation. On the Straits William's eyes were fixed as keenly as they had been throughout the late negotiations; and with good reason. Louis's designs there grew more patent every day. Within two months of the first warning a kinsman of Pepys's had visited the place by his direction and had found there two French officers already at work planning an extension of the harbour and new fortifications. 'I was well satisfied,' he wrote, 'with the sight at Gibraltar, and should have taken a step to Ceuta but for the haste I was in for my getting back in time to Madrid. . . . The Straits are much narrower than I thought, and with the addition of some forts and carrying the moles out further at Gibraltar, which two French engineers are now actually designing, I fear the enemy will have a secure harbour there for a squadron of ships sufficient to exclude us the Straits.'<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the year Count Schonenberg, William's envoy at Madrid, kept sending home similar reports—how Louis had persuaded the Spaniards to denude the fortresses towards the French frontier in order to strengthen those of Andalusia, how the forces of Catalonia had been sent to Gibraltar, how Renaud, one of the leading French engineers, had come to superintend the remodelling of the defences of the Straits ports. But, unlike Pepys's correspondent, he knew the Spaniards too well not to laugh at it all, and was sure that in the end nothing would be

<sup>1</sup> J. Jackson to Pepys from Cadiz, March 25, 1701, *Hodgkin MSS.* 184.

done. In his last letters, written at the close of the year, he was able to report that Cadiz was still in no state to resist an attack, that Gibraltar was practically without fortifications or defences, and that Renaud was angrily complaining he had been sent on a fool's errand 'to build castles in Spain.'<sup>1</sup> With such information as this streaming home there can be little doubt of the intention of the proposed demonstration. But Rooke, whose lack of imagination must ever deny him a front place among naval commanders, did not like the idea. Thoroughly orthodox, his mind could only dwell on the risk involved. Like all English admirals of the time he was nervous about taking a first-class fleet to the southward so late in the year. The difficulty of getting it safely back into the Channel in the late autumn oppressed him, and Van Almonde the Dutch admiral agreed. All through July, while the negotiations for the Grand Alliance were going on at the Hague and the fleet was getting ready for sea, they continued to protest against the orders which British commerce approved and which William regarded as an essential backing to his diplomacy.

The negotiations themselves were conducted by Marlborough, to whom William had become reconciled since the Queen's death. As the King's increasing infirmities warned him that his own end was approaching, he looked for some one on whom his cloak might fall—some one who could worthily grasp and handle foreign politics with his own wide imagination. It was on Marlborough his choice had sagaciously settled, and he had taken the ambitious general with him to the Hague as plenipotentiary, that he might in good time become familiar with the intricate ropes. The pupil proved

<sup>1</sup> See Schonenburg's despatches, April to November, 1701, *S.P. Foreign, Spain*, 75.

worthy of his great master, and henceforward, if we look for the hand that held the helm of British naval policy steady for the Mediterranean, we find almost always that it is Marlborough's. It was so from the first. The main idea for the moment was to endeavour to save the situation on the basis of the last partition treaty. For the Emperor William demanded Milan and the Netherlands, and for himself guarantees in the Mediterranean and the West Indies. On this Marlborough tells us he insisted—even against the jealousy and faint-heartedness of the Dutch—as the sole condition on which a peaceful settlement by a new partition treaty would be accepted in England.<sup>1</sup> A week after he had made this declaration the negotiations were broken off and Rooke received orders for immediate action.

The admiral's protests had had their effect. Instead of carrying the whole fleet down to the Straits he was now ordered to blockade Brest, or if he found Château-Rénauld had put to sea he was, as he himself had suggested, to cruise off the mouth of the Channel and cover the trade. At the same time he was to detach a squadron of thirty-five of the lesser ships of the line, under Benbow and Sir John Munden, to the Azores to forestall the French in intercepting the Plate fleet and to 'take care of it for those who were entitled to it.' With these orders, so Elizabethan in flavour, Rooke put to sea, and, having detached Benbow, he proceeded to Brest. He found Château-Rénauld had gone. A few days later, news came that the Plate fleet had been stopped at the Indies. Benbow was recalled, and Rooke in council of war decided it was time to bring the main fleet into Spithead.

The outbreak of war was thus averted. There was

<sup>1</sup> Marlborough to Godolphin, July 22, 1701, in *Coxe's Life of Marlborough*, chap. ix.

still hope. Marlborough had succeeded in negotiating an alliance with the Emperor and the Protestant powers, which might yet bring France to reason, when an event happened which Louis recklessly used to make all further negotiation impossible. As Marlborough's treaty was being signed, James II. died, and Louis, in defiance of the treaty of Ryswick and of the tenderest susceptibilities of English public opinion, recognised his son as King of England. The insult was unpardonable, the provocation glaring. In the height of the war fever a general election was held, and a new Parliament met, pledged and even on fire to back William against his old enemy to the utmost limit of their resources. Forty thousand troops and as many seamen were immediately voted, and the war had come at last.

From the point of view of the higher naval strategy no war has more illuminating instruction for our own time than that of the Spanish succession. In many respects the conditions and objects of naval power closely resembled those which exist to-day. It was a war to prevent the dangerous preponderance of an ambitious and powerful military state; it was also a war for the freedom of commerce; and the one element against which no continental power had an equal card to play was the British navy. During the late peace the strain of Louis's army had been too great to allow him thoroughly to re-establish his navy, while on the other hand the jealousy of a standing army, which in England had destroyed William's military resources, had not extended to the navy. Its power and efficiency had been well maintained. Ships had been kept in good condition and the peace footing settled at fifteen thousand men. Every one recognised it as the most trenchant weapon in the armoury of the alliance, but no two strategists agreed on how it could

be best employed. The Emperor hoped to see it at Naples, and in the spring made a formal proposal to that end; but he was informed politely that it was too late in the year for the great ships to go so far, as there was as yet no intermediate port available for wintering. Next year moreover he would probably be better able to co-operate, and in the meanwhile it should be disposed with a particular regard to his interests.<sup>1</sup> Prince Eugene, who was actively engaged with Marshal Catinat in Lombardy, more modestly desired that at least a portion of it should be sent into the Adriatic to protect his communications with Trieste, which were being threatened from Toulon. On the other hand, the Dutch and North German Princes who had joined the alliance, ignoring the lessons of the late war, would have had it operating on the north coast of France with a view to relieving by diversions the pressure on their own frontiers.

Rooke's imagination could reach no higher. In January 1702 he presented to the King his plan of campaign. A main fleet of fifty English and thirty Dutch of the line was to be formed. Its objective he does not mention, but it was certainly not for the Straits. For 'the southward' he proposed a secondary fleet of thirty English and twenty Dutch 'to go abroad with eight thousand English and Dutch soldiers to attempt something on Spain or Portugal.' The remainder of the available ships, being thirty sail of the line with frigates and smaller craft, were 'to remain at home for the security of the Channel.'<sup>2</sup> This appears to be little more than the vague defensive strategy of the Elizabethan Government which Drake had tried so hard to break

<sup>1</sup> 'The answer to Count Wratislaw's proposal,' April 19, 1702, *H.O. Admiralty*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Rooke's Journal*, p. 144, January 10, 1702. See also *ibid.* p. 255, where the plan appears in detail, but under date by error January 10, 1703.

down. William's genius had left it far behind. His extraordinary capacity for seeing the vast theatre as a whole fixed his eyes on Cadiz. His unerring judgment, no less than his experience during the late war, showed it to him as the first strategical point to make, and there in its spacious roadstead, and amidst its well-defended dockyards, he saw the true position for his naval base. All its manifold significance was clear to him. Its possession would give him the command of the Straits and the West Indian trade; it would enable him to cut in two the naval position of France, and at the same time would open a door for military and political action at the point most distant from Louis's base, and draw into his own system the life-blood of Spain.

Rooke's instructions leave little doubt as to which of these considerations was uppermost in William's mind. The true object of the expedition to Cadiz, with which the war opened, has been generally missed. It has been assumed that it meant no more than the similar expeditions that had preceded it in Elizabethan and Stuart times—that it was in fact, like them, aimed primarily at the American trade and colonies, and intended secondarily as a diversion. Its main object, however, was certainly the command of the Straits—a first step to the development of a true Mediterranean policy. This is clear from the instructions which Rooke received when war was actually declared. It was not, unfortunately, by the King's hand that they were delivered. William was dead, and Anne reigned in his stead. Still all had been settled beforehand. The only difference was that the change of the crown and a consequent change in the Admiralty led to delays that were irreparable. War was declared through the fleet on May 4. A fortnight later Prince George of Denmark, the Queen's consort, was made Lord

High Admiral and Rooke Vice-Admiral of England, and it was not till June 7 that he received his official instructions. With the military force that was to accompany him he was first to endeavour to surprise and capture Cadiz. 'But in case it shall appear,' they continue, 'upon your arrival at Cadiz, that there is such a considerable garrison of disciplined troops in the town and such a squadron of ships in the bay or harbour as may render the attempt impracticable, you are then to proceed to Gibraltar, or take on your way home Vigo, Ponta Vedra, Coruña, or any other place belonging to Spain or France as shall be judged proper by a council of war.' He was further authorised to assist the military commander in holding any captured place that was tenable, and leave there a sufficient squadron. The main idea became still clearer in the additional secret instructions which were to be communicated to no one but the Duke of Ormonde who was in command of the troops, and not even to him, as they say, 'till after the success of your undertaking at Cadiz or Gibraltar is known.' Then, and not till then, he was to detach a squadron and two thousand troops to the West Indies.<sup>1</sup>

These instructions must be carefully noted. It is apparently from having missed them that the highest authorities have been led to an entire misconception of William's strategy. It is almost universally said that his main object was the capture of the Spanish American colonies; that it was with this object he meant to begin by attacking Cadiz, the headquarters of the Armada of the Ocean; and that it was only by accident that the main action of the fleet was eventually in the Mediterranean. In the third year of the war, as a consequence of the adhesion of Portugal to the alliance, the Arch-

<sup>1</sup> *Home Office, Admiralty*, xiii. 3.

duke Charles resolved to land at Lisbon, and thence, with the support of the Portuguese and the maritime powers, to enforce his claim by an invasion of Spain. But for this, so it is generally asserted, the allied fleets would have been primarily occupied with the West Indies. Rooke's orders, following in the direct line of William's previous naval action and his recent diplomacy, show clearly that this was not the intention. They show that, from the first, action against the West Indies was to be secondary, and that the main action of the fleet was to be directed to the dislocation of the enemy's sea power at its origin by seizing the command of the Straits and controlling the Mediterranean. That William could conceive a plan of action so advanced, and Marlborough develop it as he did, entitle them both to rank as high among naval strategists as they do in their own special art.

That Rooke was authorised, if neither Cadiz nor Gibraltar could be had, to attempt one of the more northerly ports in no way detracts from the clearness of the conception. The meaning of this was that Louis, in his eagerness to secure his position in the Spanish seas, had succeeded in making a treaty with Portugal by which the ships of the allies were to be excluded from its ports. Lisbon could not be used as an advanced British base as it had been formerly, and it was therefore necessary, as a step to further action in the Mediterranean, to secure another port as near to the Straits as might be. Rooke's alternative orders, therefore, only confirm the determination to make the Spanish seas the centre of British naval action.

If any doubt were left, it would be removed by the instructions of the next two years, which, as we shall see, are based on the fixed idea of the main fleet acting within the Straits, before ever the Archduke was landed in

Lisbon. Even then the intention of the British Government was to use the main fleet to secure for the allies the invaluable lines of Mediterranean communication, to support the war in Italy, to establish there a base for an invasion of south-eastern France, and so to cut Louis off from the sea from which he drew the bulk of his extraneous resources. From the first it was recognised that Toulon was 'the key of the situation,' and, at least in Marlborough's mind, every movement of the fleet was but a step to this goal. From his place in the House of Lords years afterwards, when the conduct of the war in Spain was under inquiry, he put the matter beyond doubt. 'My Lords,' said he, 'I had the honour of the Queen's command to treat with the Duke of Savoy about an attempt upon Toulon, which her Majesty from the beginning of this war had looked on as one of the most effectual means to finish it. Spain did not enter into the design. The war there was to be managed on its own bottom.' In other words, the invasion of Spain was, from the naval and military point of view, a mere diversion which political exigencies rendered desirable. It was the command of the Mediterranean that was the real object, and Toulon the ultimate objective; and so far from the presence of the Archduke in Spain determining the action of the fleet, the truth is from first to last it did nothing but hamper and spoil it.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE CAMPAIGN OF 1702

OWING to various causes of delay, not the least of which was the ill-advised destruction of William's standing army, it was past midsummer before the expedition was ready to sail. But, vexing as was the difficulty of procuring troops in time, there came from it a priceless boon. For it was at this time the famous corps of Royal Marines was permanently established with the view of providing the fleet with a landing force that should be always available. Experience had shown how limited was the potentiality of a fleet that had no such extension of its arm. We have seen how Cromwell's design on Gibraltar had to be abandoned for want of such a force, and the events of the coming war were to prove its value up to the hilt and lay the foundations of a regimental reputation unsurpassed in the history of warfare. Attempts to solve the problem may be traced back through the 'Maritime Regiments' of Restoration times to the 'Sea Regiments' in the Elizabethan fleets. The idea took more definite shape when at the end of 1689 William III. had raised his First and Second Regiments of Marines. But even these were intended quite as much to supply the dearth of seamen as to create a landing force. Burchett assures us that one of the principal motives in raising them was that they should be a nursery for seamen, and so soon

as a marine could qualify as a foremast hand he was passed to the ship's books and his place in the regiment filled up with a recruit.<sup>1</sup> Burchett really understates the case. From the numerous orders issued for the regulation of the new force, and the controversy to which it gave rise in the press, it is clear that it was based on the marine regiments of Colbert. The main idea, as in France, was to provide a standing force of trained and disciplined men who would be at hand as a nucleus for mobilisation at any moment while seamen were being collected, and who would give a better tone to the crews.

To this end two three-battalion regiments, each three thousand strong, were to be raised. Half were always to serve with the fleet and half ashore alternately. While ashore they were to be trained as soldiers and employed in the dockyards as riggers and labourers, so as to be available for equipping and transporting ships at any sudden call. Afloat they were to be trained not only in musketry, but as seamen and gunners. It is evident that no mere landing force was intended, but rather an anticipation of our present system of continuous service which was not established till the eve of the Crimean War.

Well meant as the scheme was, we can see it was too military in conception to be an entire success. It is true it had saved the situation when Russell was at Cadiz and the men had done well; but the organisation was faulty and led to much abuse. In spite of several prohibitions, numbers of sea-officers obtained commissions concurrently with their ordinary ones, and for this and other reasons the force fell into confusion and dwindled. At the end of the war an attempt was made to reorganise it in four regiments, but the suspicious antipathy to a standing

<sup>1</sup> *Naval History*, book v. chap. ix.

army was growing irresistible, and the defenders of the force were not able to show a good enough record to overcome it. The new regiments were actually raised, but the hostility only increased, and in 1699 they were swept away in the short-sighted policy that deprived William of his army.<sup>1</sup>

William's attempt, it will be seen, was really aimed at providing the navy with a backbone of men trained as the bluejacket is to-day, rather than at creating a true marine force as it was afterwards understood. But whether or not such an achievement was possible in those days, the difficulty of getting troops at a pinch for Rooke's fleet abundantly emphasised the importance of a standing military force to act with the navy. No less than six regiments were raised, but they were put on a different footing from their predecessors. There was no longer any idea of their being a nursery for seamen, and the men were not allowed to pass into the working crews of the ship. They were to be and remain a purely military force paid out of the navy vote, and under the command of the Admiralty. We may well believe that one of the principal motives this time was to elude the rooted objection to a standing army, which Parliament had lately so unhappily displayed, by making the new regiments part of their beloved navy. But, however this may be, the Marines rapidly, as we shall see, asserted their own intrinsic value apart from any constitutional or political consideration. As Burchett wrote, when they

<sup>1</sup> Major Edge, *History of the Royal Marine Forces*. The author rejects the idea that William's marine regiments were raised as a nursery for seamen, having, in spite of his exhaustive research, missed Burchett's direct statement on the point. The official and pamphlet evidence that he has collected gives abundant proof that Burchett was not mistaken. For further evidence of the political antipathy to the Marines, see 'A Seaman's Opinion of a Standing Army in England,' January 1699, in the *Collection of State Tracts, temp. William III.*, ii. 684.

had been well proved, 'experience hath shown that these regiments have been very useful, but more especially upon fitting out squadrons of ships for any immediate expedition; for as they are constantly quartered, when not at sea, as near the principal ports as possible, namely, Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Chatham, so were they with great facility put on board such ships as had most occasion for them, for they were under the immediate direction of the Admiralty.' It was not too much to say; for to their readiness and to the rapidity and length of stroke which they gave the fleet were due the two achievements which established England in the Mediterranean.

Had they been in existence at the beginning of the war there might have been a different tale to tell. Much obstruction and delay must at any rate have been got rid of, which spoiled the British initiative. Most of it came from Rooke himself. As the season advanced, his old anxieties recurred, and he began to fight shy of taking the fleet so far as Cadiz. 'I must repeat my opinion,' he wrote to Prince George on June 1, 'that no service can balance the hazard of bringing our great ships home in the winter;' and he added that, as it was, 'the expedition was pretty much to pieces to execute this great design.' It is clear from his letters at this time that he wished nothing better than that it should remain 'in pieces' till it was too late to sail for the Straits.<sup>1</sup> The whole plan of campaign was opposed to the views he had expressed. It was Marlborough's, not his, and already he was finding himself displaced in the naval councils of the nation by Marlborough's brother, George Churchill, who was installed at the Admiralty as the Prince Consort's right-hand man. From the first

<sup>1</sup> *H.O. Admiralty*, xi.

therefore he set himself in sullen opposition to the official scheme. 'Rooke,' says Burnet, 'spoke so coldly of the design he went upon before he sailed, that those who conversed with him were apt to infer that he intended to do the enemy as little harm as possible.' The worthy Bishop had always an ill word for Rooke, and his caustic comment must be received with discretion. Still, there is no doubt Rooke was not quite loyal to his orders, and that he did everything he could to get his own plan of campaign substituted for that which Marlborough had received from William.

As it happened, an alternative presented itself. Earlier in the year Sir John Munden had been sent out to prevent a French squadron from Rochelle reaching Coruña, where the outgoing flota was awaiting its escort to Mexico. He had failed, and the two fleets had got together into Coruña. Rooke's council of war therefore decided that their best course was first to direct the force against that place, and endeavour, by combined land and sea operations, to destroy the fleets where they lay. If, on their arrival, they found them gone, they would then consider Cadiz. This plan, which, as being directed against an important fleet of the enemy, was sound enough, received the sanction of the Government; but at the same time Rooke was told that his former instructions were to stand, and that as for his anxiety about his great ships he was to run the risk of getting them home in the storm months rather than give up Cadiz, or, if that could not be done, he could leave them behind in any port he took, and stores should be sent out to refit them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hedges to Rooke, June 17, 1702, and 'Further Instructions,' July 12 (*Halton-Finch Papers*, Add. MSS. 29591), where most of the orders and correspondence relating to this campaign are collected.

An advanced squadron of twenty-two of the line, or nearly half the fleet, was sent forward under Sir Stafford Fairborne, son of the famous Governor of Tangier, to blockade Coruña till the main fleet arrived. This was Rooke's first step towards getting his own way; and as Marlborough was absent, fighting in the Low Countries, the admiral's plausible views were difficult to resist. His next move, as July came and the expedition was still at its moorings, was to induce Van Almonde, the Dutch admiral, to write to his Government impressing upon them the risk of carrying out the original programme.<sup>1</sup> He was further backed by Shovell, to whom was committed the task of blockading Brest and guarding the Channel in the absence of the main fleet. He complained that thirty ships of the line was a force inadequate for the purpose. The words of his protest are worth recording. 'The misfortune and vice of our country,' he wrote to the Earl of Nottingham 'is to believe ourselves better than other men, which I take to be the reason that generally we send too small a force to execute our designs; but experience has taught me that, when men are equally inured and disciplined in war, 'tis, without a miracle, numbers that gain the victory. For both in fleets, squadrons, and single ships of nearly equal force, by the time one is beaten and ready to retreat, the other is also beaten and glad his enemy has left him. To fight, beat, and chase an enemy of the same strength I have sometimes seen, but have rarely seen at sea any victory worth the boasting, when the strength has been near equal.'<sup>2</sup> It was sound sense enough, and especially for the ears of a minister; but fortunately it was a doctrine which British admirals have

<sup>1</sup> *Rooke's Journal*, July 12, 1702.

<sup>2</sup> *Home Office, Admiralty*, xi., July 19, 1702. He repeats these views on July 28, *ibid.*

been wont to honour more in the breach than the observance.

These protests and complaints were also supported by Lord Pembroke in his last words as Lord High Admiral before he resigned in favour of the Prince Consort.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately Churchill's growing influence over the easy-going Prince was strong and firm enough not to let Rooke off altogether. Though he was released from the necessity of attempting Gibraltar, he was held to Cadiz with the more northerly ports as alternatives if the place were found impracticable. So far from relenting, the Government had new reasons for holding him to their plan.

Owing to the demonstration which William III. had made with Benbow's and Munden's squadrons before the war broke out, it was two years since a Plate fleet had come home, and so great was the consequent financial stress in Spain that early in the year Château-Réault with twenty-three of the Brest squadron had gone out to the West Indies to fetch it.<sup>2</sup> On July 14 news was received from Benbow, who was in the West Indies, that Château-Réault with his priceless charge was about to sail for Europe. Both in England and France it was expected he would make for a French port, and from this moment the British Government became preoccupied with the determination to prevent the vast treasure falling into Louis's hands. It was decided that Shovell with an increased force should take up a station from which he could cover Brest, Rochefort, and Port Louis, and the

<sup>1</sup> See his protest against the Mediterranean policy, *H.O. Admiralty*, xi. and xvi., May 20, 1702.

<sup>2</sup> Duro, *Armada Española*, vol. vi. cap. ii. and *Appendix, Désastre en Vigo*. For Shovell's and Byng's movements see *Memoirs of Torrington*, p. 90 *et seq.* See also *Rooke's Journal* and *Life of Capt. Stephen Martin* (*Navy Records Soc.*), and Guérin, iv. 112 *et seq.*

immediate importance of Rooke's fleet was that he should close Cadiz and the adjacent ports, and so head Château-Réault into Shovell's arms.

It was this consideration, so far as we can judge, rather than Rooke's opposition that modified the original plan of campaign. His objections were met one after another with determined astuteness. As he continued to grumble about the safety of his three-deckers, Shovell was told to proceed westward immediately, and if he could come up with Rooke before he sailed he was to relieve him of his largest ships and give him in exchange an equivalent number of third rates. In this way the ground was cut from under Rooke, and at the same time Shovell's request for an increase of force would be met. But it was a solution of the situation that was little to Rooke's mind, and, finding himself outmanœuvred, he got away to sea before Shovell could reach him. It was all the Government required, and they contented themselves by sending orders after him, that, so soon as he had carried out his instructions, he could return home, leaving Shovell reinforced with ten or twelve of his best ships to intercept Château-Réault if he had not already arrived.<sup>1</sup>

With these orders Rooke cleared the Channel on July 25, leaving Shovell, as we have seen, to lament his inadequate force. Rooke's fleet, including the Dutch contingent and Fairborne's squadron that was ahead of him, numbered fifty of the line, some ten frigates, about twenty bombs and fire-ships, and no less than seven hospital ships. Besides these there were fifty transports, and the whole fleet, with ordnance and store ships, amounted to nearly two

<sup>1</sup> *Hatton-Finch Papers, Add. MSS. 29591*, where are collected all the orders &c. relating to the intercepting of the Plate fleet. See also *Rooke's Journal*, July 24, p. 170. and *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 39, July 20.

hundred sail.<sup>1</sup> Off Finisterre he ascertained that Coruña was empty. The birds had flown before Fairborne's squadron could arrive to shut them in, and, after spending some time in finding him, Rooke held on for Cadiz. His information assured him that it was strongly garrisoned—too strongly at least to be taken by a *coup de main*. But instead of leaving it alone, as their instructions directed, Ormonde and the Council of War decided to land and occupy the neighbouring port towns, and so reduce it by degrees. A landing was accordingly effected at Rota, on the opposite side of the bay, but not till August 15, three days after they had appeared before the place.

Had the whole force been under one capable and resolute hand, there was still no reason why Cadiz should not have been taken and held. But with the divided and inefficient counsels that disturbed the expedition success was impossible. Ormonde had neither the experience nor the character to hold it together. His second in command, Belasyse, was no better. Rooke, who disapproved the whole affair and was unwell, had taken to his bed as soon as he had cleared the Channel, and was concerned for nothing but getting his fleet safely home again.<sup>2</sup> Not only did soldier pull against sailor, but there was no agreement either in the army or the fleet, nor between the Dutch and the English. To make matters worse, the most capable man in the force was the representative of the Emperor, Prince George of Hesse Darmstadt, whose mission was political. As Governor of Catalonia during the late war he had endeared himself to the people and been the heart and soul of their resistance to the French

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, 160, 248. It is interesting to note that, before sailing, Rooke protested to Nottingham against his small force of frigates being further reduced, 'for,' he said, 'we have fewer cruisers than any fleet of this consequence ever had.' *H.O. Admiralty*, xi., June 15, 1702.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 215, note.

after Russell had been compelled to abandon them. Under Bourbon influence he had been removed, and at the outbreak of the new war he had been sent forward to Lisbon to endeavour to persuade Portugal to desert the French and accede to the Grand Alliance. From that port, before he had achieved any success, he had joined the fleet, and was now bent on preventing any action which might alienate the Spaniards from the Hapsburg cause.

This, unhappily, it was out of his power to prevent. Aimless and undisciplined operations about Port St. Mary and the neighbouring suburbs of Cadiz ensued, in which the army demoralised itself by plunder and drink and destroyed all hope of Spanish co-operation. Though Fairborne, full of his father's spirit, was always ready with some vigorous design for supporting Ormonde's proposals, he could not overcome the dead weight of Rooke's inertia, and the army could never get adequate support from the fleet. Whether from pique or because he was really ill, the admiral was still in bed, and indeed he remained there almost continually throughout the operations before Cadiz. Vice-Admiral Hopsonn, his second in command, who had to write his despatches for him, said he had gout in the hand and a touch of fever, and was 'extremely ill.'<sup>1</sup> In three weeks' time things had come to such a pass that it was resolved to burn the Spanish magazines which they had captured and re-embark the troops. Hopsonn began to despair of taking the place. It was too late for the fleet to attend a regular siege. 'A vigorous and severe bombardment,' he said, was the only chance. The soldiers were of the same opinion,

<sup>1</sup> Hopsonn's despatch, August 26, *Add. MSS.* 29591. This is confirmed by a despatch of Van Almonde's to the States General, De Jonge, iv. ii. 218.

and this method it was resolved to try. But here the Prince of Hesse stepped in. A bombardment of the first port in Spain was not calculated to increase the popularity of the Hapsburgs with the Spaniards, and Rooke found a technical excuse for abandoning the project.

There was then no thought but of home. In vain the Prince of Hesse urged them to winter in some Spanish port, and told them the Hapsburg cause was lost if they retired without effecting anything. He suggested the ports named in Rooke's commission, but Rooke got an opinion from his pilots against them all. He suggested a port within the Straits near Alicante, whence he promised he could raise the whole of Valencia, Aragon, and Catalonia against the Bourbons. Rooke's last instructions forbade him going south of Cadiz. The Prince told him plainly that he knew he had not been in earnest from the first, and all along had only been seeking an excuse to return. Rooke was unmoved, and a few days later his Council of War decided to go home in spite of the protests of Ormonde and the Dutch general.

So lame a conclusion was the last thing the home Government expected. The country was rejoicing over Marlborough's successes in the Low Countries and Eugene's hard-won victory in Italy. The capture of Cadiz—the easiest of the three main operations of the campaign—was regarded as a foregone conclusion. A week after the troops had landed the good news from Flanders was sent out to Rooke, and with it fresh orders for his further movements. It is these orders that leave no doubt as to the lines on which the war had been designed. In the despatch which brought them the Government makes a last effort to get the stubborn admiral to understand the true object of their eagerness to get hold of Cadiz. Their chief incentive was not political, but naval. As in the last war,

Cadiz was to be made a base from which to control the Mediterranean and the military operations upon its shores. He was informed that a small French squadron under Forbin was harassing Prince Eugene's communication and interrupting the passage of his supplies in the Gulf of Venice. It was believed that the Comte de Toulouse, who was in command at Toulon, intended to join him for more serious operations, and Rooke was told that, so soon as Cadiz was in the hands of the allies, he was to detach a squadron of eighteen or twenty sail to the Adriatic to parry the French move. Toulouse, the Government had ascertained, had about ten ships and six galleys, and Forbin three frigates and two fire-ships.

But this was not all, or nearly all. Marlborough, regarding the fall of Cadiz as a practical certainty, was already at work preparing his further blow at the heart of the French Mediterranean power, and in the new orders is the first indication of what was in the wind. Cadiz was but a stepping-stone to Toulon, and Rooke, without any explanation, was quietly informed that he need not run the risk of bringing home his great ships before winter. The Queen intended in the next year to have a much larger fleet in the Mediterranean, and that he was therefore to refit as many ships as possible in the Cadiz yards in readiness for the next campaign.<sup>1</sup>

In all this we may trace with certainty Marlborough's hand. Sir David Mitchell, Russell's old flag captain and his second in command in the Mediterranean, who was now on the Lord Admiral's Council and represented in politics all that was antagonistic to Rooke, was over in Holland negotiating with the States for further naval co-operation, and Marlborough, in the midst of his arduous

<sup>1</sup> *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 33, August 21, 1702, and *Add. MSS.* 29591, same date.

campaign, was guiding his hand.<sup>1</sup> Marlborough's unfailing readiness to assist his great rival, Eugene, is one of the brightest features in his character; but in this case it was not to be. Unless Cadiz fell, the expedition to the Adriatic was impossible. About a month later, after Hopsonn's despatch had been received with its unsatisfactory account of the admiral's health and the state of the operations, the Government resigned themselves to their disappointment and wrote patiently to both Rooke and Ormonde, bidding them, as they were not likely to succeed at Cadiz, to try something else.<sup>2</sup>

The truth is that at this time they were more than ever absorbed in their anxiety to intercept Château-Réault. The old hankering after the treasure fleet in fact was beginning to distort their strategical aims as seriously as it had done those of the Elizabethans. All August intelligence of the French admiral's movements had been coming in, and it was immediately sent off to both Rooke and Shovell. Shovell, after his complaint, had been reinforced, and for the moment Cadiz was not the first consideration. The last intelligence received by the home Government assured them that Château-Réault was after all going to try to get into Cadiz and not Brest. The main consideration therefore was to keep Rooke on the Spanish coast. The information was hurried off to him, and at the same time Shovell was given authority to stretch down as far as Finisterre to bar the way to Coruña.

Soon after writing their indulgent despatch, however, it would seem that something occurred to brace the Government back to their original high intention, and that at the same time they received some intimation that the

<sup>1</sup> Marlborough to Mitchell, August 14, 1702, *Despatches*, i. 18. The letter refers mainly to a West Indian expedition, but that was not Mitchell's main business. See Marlborough to Nottingham, *ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. and *Add. MSS.* 29591, September 16, 1702.

real cause of the failure at Cadiz, as they had too much reason to expect, was Rooke's obstinate refusal to give to Ormonde the support that he had the right to demand. At all events their note changed, and a week later they sent him still more unwelcome orders, which were indeed not far removed from a reprimand. He was told that the Government regarded the occupation of Cadiz as a matter of the highest importance. Instead of coming home, therefore, he was to continue to support the operations of the troops and to remain out till further orders, or until the land officers agreed that further operations were useless. When the great ships could no longer keep the sea he was to send them into Lisbon and winter them there.<sup>1</sup>

Here then we have a firm determination of the Government, in spite of their preoccupation, to hold Rooke to the original plan of campaign, or in other words to the Mediterranean. They were beginning to lose hope of the Plate fleet. Since it had been so long in appearing they feared it must be already somewhere safe in harbour. Moreover, the effect of the fleet's being off Cadiz so long without any sign of opposition from France was that the attitude of Portugal was becoming more favourable and the prospects of the Mediterranean looked more rosy. But already, as the sharp despatch was being penned, Rooke was in the act of abandoning his position; nor, when the proposal to winter in Lisbon reached him direct from Methuen, the British Ambassador to Portugal, did it have any effect. For some time past it was known in the fleet that its presence had caused the Portuguese

<sup>1</sup> *Add. MSS.* 29591 (*Hatton-Finch Papers*), September 14 and 24. Also *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. At this point there is unfortunately a gap in this Entry Book, but the *Hatton-Finch Papers* to some extent continue the series of despatches.

King to back out of his engagement to France, though as yet he hesitated to throw in his lot with the allies. Methuen believed that it only required a squadron to winter in the Tagus and other Portuguese ports to make him take the plunge, and a despatch hinting this reached Rooke on September 21 as the fleet rendezvoused off Lagos on the south coast of Portugal for the homeward voyage.

Methuen had arranged to communicate with Rooke through the British consul at Faro, and as the fleet passed it a Dutch cruiser was sent in to bring off despatches. In view of what afterwards occurred this becomes highly important. On receipt of Methuen's suggestion a council of war was summoned, but it decided that his proposal was too vague to act on, and that there was no time to wait for a more definite explanation. The decision, it would seem, was taken by a bare majority, for Ormonde, Hesse, and the Dutch generally continued to support the idea so warmly that a fresh council was called. It was only to endorse Rooke's determination. Whatever chance of Portuguese support, it was argued, there may have been when Methuen wrote, the whole situation was changed by the failure at Cadiz, and Portugal could no longer be trusted. In accordance, therefore, with the original instructions, six of the line and a dozen transports with three thousand men were detached to the West Indies, and Rooke was soon speeding northward, ignorant that before him lay an exploit which was to retrieve his reputation and finally place Portugal at the disposition of the allies.

What had happened was this. Having evaded Benbow in the West Indies, Château-Rénault and his priceless charge had reached the Azores in safety. There he had received information of the British movements to inter-

cept him, and had done his best to persuade his Spanish colleagues to seek safety in Brest or some other French port. To so insidious a proposal they absolutely refused to listen, and the only thing for Château-Rénault to do was to try a dash through the enemy's cruisers. St. Vincent and Finisterre were the points of danger. There the English had been wont to lie on such occasions ever since the days of Elizabeth. Vigo lay midway between them. To Vigo therefore it was decided to go, and there on September 11 Château-Rénault arrived, having cleverly slipped in unobserved between Rooke and Shovell.

For this Rooke both then and since has always been severely blamed. He is accused of wholly neglecting the treasure fleet and of taking no steps to get intelligence of it, and by no one more acrimoniously than by Methuen himself. But, however badly Rooke behaved during the campaign, this charge is one that cannot be upheld. As we have seen, he duly sent into Faro and received Methuen's last despatch. Although the Plate fleet had been in Vigo five days when he wrote it, it contained no mention of it, except a rumour that Château-Rénault was expected—a rumour which Methuen himself clearly did not believe.<sup>1</sup> Rooke also, before passing St. Vincent, sent three cruisers with the home transports into Lagos to water, and later on three more into Lisbon to bring Methuen back to England. It is true these detachments were apparently to make their own way home, but it is clear that, if Methuen had any news, he had abundant opportunity of sending it.

Meanwhile, on the 18th, the ambassador had heard of Château-Rénault's arrival at Vigo and was sending messenger after messenger to the coast. The first one reached the British consul at Faro late on the night of the 22nd. The fleet had just passed westward out of

<sup>1</sup> *Rooke's Journal*, pp. 217, 221.

sight, and while the council of war were deciding to continue the homeward voyage the consul in person was pursuing Rooke in a hired boat. In spite of his efforts he failed to find the fleet and had to return discomfited. It so happened, however, that Methuen's messenger, a certain Don Josef Cisneros, who was also carrying despatches from the Imperial ambassador to the Prince of Hesse, was on his own account pursuing the fleet by land along the coast. At Lagos he found the horse transports still watering, and fell in with some of the officers of the 'Pembroke,' one of the escorting frigates. By the help of their chaplain they quickly ascertained his news and carried him on board to their commander, Captain Hardy. The glorious news was promptly communicated to the commodore, Captain Wishart, and he at once took the responsibility of sending off the 'Pembroke' to catch the fleet.<sup>1</sup> It was a hard chase. The weather proved very bad—so bad indeed was it that the cruisers which put into the Tagus with Rooke's letters, showing he had not received the news, could not put to sea again, in spite of Methuen's urgent orders, and he despaired of catching the fleet before it left the coast. Unknown to him, however, there was yet another chance. The news had already reached London, and orders were being sent off far and wide in eight duplicates, directing Rooke and Shovell to concert measures for the destruction of Château-Rénault wherever they found him, either at sea or in Vigo.<sup>2</sup> All was over before they came to hand. But with all these strings in play it is clear that it was by no mere chance, as it is always said, that Château-Rénault

<sup>1</sup> *Hatton-Finch Papers (Methuen Correspondence)*, Add. MSS. 29590, esp. ff. 135, 137, 151, and Methuen's despatch of October 5. For the chaplain's story see *Lediard*, ii. 753, n.

<sup>2</sup> Add. MSS. 29591, October 4 and 17; *Admiralty, Secretary's Out-Letters*, 29, October 5, 17, 20.

was caught. The Admiralty, Methuen, Shovell, and Rooke between them had taken steps which made his escape practically impossible.

Still Rooke had already reached as high as the extreme north of Portugal, close to Shovell's new station, before Hardy overtook him, and even then so foul was the weather that it was twelve hours before he could communicate his news to the admiral. At the time Rooke had his few remaining cruisers spread before him in a way that very probably would have got him the intelligence independently. So soon as he heard Hardy's report he called them in and formed a chain to connect him with Vigo and signal him a confirmation of Hardy's intelligence. The whole fleet then stood in after them, and the following day, when the weather had abated, he called a council of flag-officers. The question of attacking Château-Rénault where he lay appears to have met with considerable opposition. The danger of risking a great fleet so late in the season on that wild coast was insisted on, and some, it would seem, were in favour of still continuing their homeward voyage, since they regarded the treasure fleet as now beyond their reach. Eventually, however, the more vigorous men prevailed, and, without consulting the military officers, it was decided to attack forthwith.<sup>1</sup>

As they approached Vigo they fell in with Captain George Byng, who had lately reinforced Shovell with a small division. From him they heard that the Channel

<sup>1</sup> This view of what occurred is mainly on Dutch authority. Their tradition is that the decision to attack was due to the resolute attitude of Van Almonde in opposition to Rooke 'as well as most of the English and Dutch flag-officers.' See De Jonge, iv. ii. 221 and *note*. In *Torrington's Memoirs* is also mentioned a report that Rooke was not in favour of attacking. Burnet says 'Rooke turned his course towards Vigo very unwillingly, as was said.' But neither of these authorities can be trusted in any statement derogatory to Rooke. It may however be true, for he still thought himself too ill to leave his cabin.

squadron had reached its new station and was cruising not far to the westward, and Rooke resolved to call Shovell to his aid. In vain Byng begged to be allowed to stay and share the feast. To his intense disgust Rooke would not listen, and he had to carry the summons to his admiral. Still there was no thought of waiting till Shovell joined. The doomed fleet was found in the inmost recesses of the gulf, protected by a powerful boom and fort, and the vessels well arranged for a concentrated fire. The risk of attacking in waters so confined was enough to have staggered the stoutest hearts, but they did not flinch. To Vice-Admiral Hopsonn was committed the honour of leading the assault, while Rooke again took to his bed, and there Byng found him when he returned in the height of the action.

As the ships advanced they were forced to anchor prematurely for want of a breeze. The troops were nevertheless landed, and luckily before they could reach the batteries a fair wind sprang up. Hopsonn promptly cut his cable and, with a press of sail, charged the boom. Under his great impetus it broke, but, before his supporting ships could follow, the breeze died away, and Hopsonn was left alone anchored within the boom between two French ships of the line. For awhile his situation was in the highest degree critical, but he fought on desperately till the breeze returned, and one by one his consorts, Dutch and English, hacked or forced their way through. At the same moment the troops carried the batteries; and then, as Captain Stephen Martin says, 'for some time there was nothing to be heard or seen but cannonading, burning, men and guns flying in the air, and altogether the most lively scene of horror and confusion that can be imagined.' All the afternoon the work of destruction raged, and when the sun went down Château-Rénault's fleet had ceased to

exist. Rooke, by the prompt daring of his officers, had gained one of the most complete victories in British naval annals. The French flagship and six others were burnt, four were captured afloat, and the rest driven ashore, and the galleons were similarly dealt with. Most of the treasure had been sent up country, but a good deal was saved, besides valuable merchandise.

Four days after the action Shovell came in, thirsting but forestalled. To him Rooke handed over the command with orders to float all he could, burn the rest, and so bring the fleet home. In vain, at the eleventh hour, Ormonde and Hesse returned to the charge and begged him to leave behind an adequate squadron so that they might establish themselves where they were for the winter, and so support Methuen in his efforts to bring Portugal to a decision. By sending home the victuallers and surplus stores, Rooke had made any such project impossible, and nothing would induce him to move from the attitude he had taken up. There was therefore nothing to be done but re-embark the troops. Captain Hardy for his reward was hurried off with despatches, and the next day Rooke with an easy conscience weighed for Spithead with sixteen sail, including the six great ships, to whose safety in his eyes all strategy had to subserve.

So he had his way at last. By forcing the campaign into the shape he had desired from the first he had been able, in accordance with his original memorandum, to 'attempt something on the coast of Spain' and come home before winter. He had seen the Government's project for seizing the control of the Straits covered with disaster, while his own miraculously had secured a victory beside which the successes of even Marlborough and Eugene looked pale.

It must not be supposed, however, that he came off

scot-free. On Ormonde's complaint a searching and hostile inquiry into the admiral's conduct was held in the House of Lords. He came out of it very badly, but his influence in the House of Commons was too great for him to fear a serious condemnation. With calm effrontery he defended himself by contemptuously denouncing the plan of campaign he had been called upon to execute against his better judgment; and the bungling way in which the expedition had been prepared for him made it impossible for the ministers to meet his defence without exposing themselves. So Ormonde was quieted with the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, and Rooke whitewashed with a seat in the Privy Council. Between the new strategists and the old it was a drawn battle, and it remained to be seen whether Marlborough would yet have his way.

## CHAPTER XXX

### MARLBOROUGH AND THE NAVY

It was not till the end of November that Marlborough was able to get back to London. In his last days at the Hague he had been urging the home Government, at the request of the Dutch, to send a squadron to secure the Portuguese and offer to co-operate with them in capturing Vigo or any other place they preferred. The news of Rooke's exploit was enough to modify the pressing necessity for such a move, and about a week after Marlborough came home the 'Secret Committee,' as it was called, which was the Supreme Council of War or Committee of Imperial Defence, had adopted a plan of action after his own heart.

The decision was taken early in December at a meeting at which both he and Rooke were present. It will be remembered that in the previous year the Emperor had been given to understand that in this campaign the fleet would co-operate with him in capturing Naples, the object on which his heart and policy were mainly set. Accordingly it was now arranged that by the beginning of February a squadron of thirty sail, to which the Dutch were to be asked to add twelve or fifteen more, was to be ready to sail for the Mediterranean, and the Emperor was to be informed that it could be at Naples by May and remain there till the middle of July. The advantages of this plan were obvious. While it would divert French attention from Toulon, it would afford an oppor-

tunity for attacking it at the most favourable season of the year, and in the meanwhile the Emperor would be kept in a good temper, and the pressure upon Eugene in the North of Italy relieved. It was only by the most brilliant generalship and dogged determination that he had been able to hold his own against the superior forces of the French, and owing to the vacillating attitude of Savoy his prospects were far from bright for the coming campaign. Rooke, it would appear, was not to conduct a move which was so contrary to his ideas. In fact he was probably regarded as too unwell to go to sea at all: for it is noted in the margin of the minutes 'Sir G. Rooke will take care of the Admiralty.'<sup>1</sup>

Why this project was not carried out we do not exactly know, but it may well have been that, owing to the late return of Rooke's and Shovell's squadron, it was found impossible to get sufficient vessels ready in time. The more probable reason however is that the Emperor found he would be unable to detach a force to co-operate with the fleet, and this from the first had been a condition of the British offer of assistance. Such co-operation was now out of the question. Owing to the serious condition of affairs in Hungary the Emperor had even found it necessary to summon Eugene to command the operations against the insurgents and to abandon altogether the idea of a vigorous offensive in Italy.<sup>2</sup>

However this may be, early in the new year, 1703, the idea of a Mediterranean squadron was considerably modified. At the end of January the 'Secret Committee' decided the general lines of the campaign. Marlborough was again present, together with Rooke and the rest of

<sup>1</sup> Secretary Clarke's rough minutes of the 'Secret Committee,' *Hatton-Finch Papers*, *Add. MSS.* 29591, December 8, 1702.

<sup>2</sup> Von Arneth *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen*, i. 119 *et seq.*

the Lord Admiral's council and the Dutch admiral, Van Almonde. The main fleet was to consist of ninety-six of the line, English and Dutch. They were to be ready for sea by April 20 and victualled for six months. In case a squadron should be thought necessary for the Mediterranean—so the minute runs—it was to be detached from the main fleet and its strength fixed according to the distribution of the French navy.<sup>1</sup> We thus see already established the most modern view of British naval distribution, which had been in practical operation ever since William had set his mark upon it. The root idea was the concentration of the bulk of the navy in one main fleet, organised so that it could act as one unit or in two divisions, as events demanded, either in the home waters or the Mediterranean, or in both simultaneously. There is clearly no idea of two fleets—one for the Channel and one for the Mediterranean—but from the first it is the conception to which our naval strategy has recurred after two centuries of experience—the conception of two divisions of one homogeneous force that, without noise or friction, can develop united action at any point where danger or opportunity calls for special pressure. To a modern student nothing can be more interesting or instructive than the way the idea of the great soldiers of that time was worked out by the seamen who so imperfectly grasped their meaning.

In spite of the hypothetical resolution of the Committee it is clear that Marlborough clung to his idea that a strong Mediterranean squadron was necessary. By March it had been fixed at twenty-four of the line, English and Dutch; and just before Marlborough returned to Holland, Rooke, who was better, was approached as to taking the command. He replied, in words that

<sup>1</sup> *Add. MSS.* 29591, January 26, 1703.

clearly betray the limits of his understanding, that he was willing to obey the Queen's wishes, but felt it was a command 'too small for his character.' If it were the same to her Majesty he would rather continue with the main fleet than be separated 'with so small a detachment on a remote service.'<sup>1</sup> On receipt of this answer the Secret Committee ordered a squadron to be made ready immediately for Shovell's command. It was to consist of twenty of the line, besides a Dutch contingent, with a full proportion of hospital ships, cruisers, bombs, and fire-ships. It was to carry a year's stores besides two months' victuals in store ships, and further supplies of wine and oil were to be prepared at Leghorn or Genoa.<sup>2</sup>

The chief and indeed the only interest that attaches to Shovell's force is the object for which it was designed. Though frequently modified in harmony with the changing aspects of the great struggle, Shovell's instructions display throughout a high appreciation of the value of a Mediterranean squadron as a diplomatic and strategical asset. As originally designed they appear to aim mainly at a diplomatic demonstration. Shovell was to renew the treaties with the Barbary states, and if possible induce them to declare war on France. He was also to appear at Leghorn and force the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was openly leaning to the French, to pursue a more strict neutrality. Venice was to be treated in the same way, and while in the Adriatic he was to clear out the French and secure the Imperial communications with Trieste. Nor was this all. For the second time Malta appears within the range of British action. Shovell was to go there, but with what object is not clear. He himself

<sup>1</sup> *Add. MSS.* 29591, March 3, 1703, f. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* March 10, 1703, f. 195.

asked for more precise directions on the point, but, before his orders were finally drafted, Malta for some reason was left out of them.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently his instructions were cast in a more strategic mould. Although the withdrawal of Eugene and some of his best troops to Hungary rendered serious operations in Italy impossible, a diversion by the maritime powers to relieve the pressure on the Imperial troops that had to hold the position was still highly desirable. By no other means could they hope to resist the French advance. Under his new orders therefore Shovell was to take down the trade, and after seeing it safe on its way to the Levant he was to proceed, in accordance with the original idea, to Naples and Sicily, and co-operate with such Imperial troops as he should find there, and assist them with his marines. He had also authority to attack Cadiz, Toulon, or any other place in France or Spain, and to destroy any French magazines he might hear of about Genoa, and to protect the Imperialist communications in the Adriatic if the French were disturbing them, as indeed they were, very seriously.<sup>2</sup> All this reads as something of a counsel of perfection, and indeed it may only have been intended mainly to satisfy Marlborough's demands, or to keep the Emperor in a good humour. The instructions, at any rate, were accompanied by a covering letter, in which Shovell was told that, after seeing the trade safe into the Eastern Mediterranean, he might proceed as far as Leghorn. Having done his business there, he was to cruise as he thought best, or in accordance with orders

<sup>1</sup> *Hatton-Finch Papers, Add. MSS.* 29591, f. 199; Particulars proposed by Shovell, March 17, *ibid.*; Minute of Lord Admiral's Council for altering Shovell's instructions, *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 71, April 28.

<sup>2</sup> *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 82, May 7.

he might receive, until September, when he was to come home with the returning trade.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, when Marlborough's back was turned and he was absorbed with his military duties in Flanders, the Mediterranean squadron seems to sink to the old and narrow conception of a force primarily destined for commerce protection. Rooke had so far got his way that he had been given command of the main fleet for the defence of the Channel. As for offensive operations, his orders were as old-fashioned as he could wish. Vast as was the force at his command, all he was expected to do was to enter the Bay of Biscay and annoy the coasts and trade of the enemy; and all the relief that the main fleet would afford to the position of the allies in the Mediterranean was by the demonstration possibly diverting some of the French army of Italy to the coasts of Guienne. Still, even with this easy task before him, he would not get to sea. Week after week he lingered at Spithead to the exasperation of the Government. At last, towards the end of April, on an alarm apparently that a French squadron was passing from Toulon to Brest, he received peremptory orders to sail. Still for a week he clung to his moorings, protesting he was too ill to move. Losing all patience, the Government sent off Churchill to relieve him. It had the desired effect. Before Churchill could reach Spithead Rooke was away. The incident did little to improve his reputation. 'Rooke's health,' says Burnet in his most caustic vein, 'returned happily for him, or he thought fit to lay aside that pretence and went to sea.' There can be no doubt that Rooke was one of those men whose popular reputation will sometimes remain proof against the most glaring exhibition of incapacity and lack of understanding.

*Admiralty, Secretary's Out-Letters*, 30, May 8.

Under his guidance the main fleet was absolutely wasted. All it achieved in harassing the French coasts and confining the Brest and other Atlantic squadrons could have been done with half the force, and the rest would have been free for action where its operations would have thrown the whole of Louis's strategy into confusion.

That the Mediterranean squadron was not detached from the first fleet that was ready, as Marlborough wished, is to be the more lamented because the interminable delays of the Dutch in furnishing their contingent prevented Shovell's sailing till it was far too late for him to accomplish anything of value. Indeed, in justice to the British strategy, it must be said that the failure of the Dutch to fulfil their engagements was the main cause of the trouble. It was a source of irritation and difficulty that was to increase with every fresh campaign, and already it was accentuating the growing ill-feeling between the British and Dutch flag-officers. 'Everybody,' wrote Marlborough, 'is so much out of humour at the great disappointment we have long laboured under for want of their Mediterranean squadron.'<sup>1</sup>

Owing mainly to the time that had been wasted in getting Rooke to sea, it was not till the middle of May that Shovell's squadron was far enough advanced for him to hoist his flag. By that time an entire change in the situation was believed to be at hand, which for the moment shifted the main naval interest to a point outside the Straits. Godolphin, the Prime Minister, was the man most closely in Marlborough's confidence. He had married the general's daughter and was indeed his other self in England; and what was actually uppermost in their minds may be gathered from a private letter written by

<sup>1</sup> To Stanhope, *Despatches*, i. 123, and cf. De Jonge, iv. ii. 253.

the minister shortly afterwards to Fairborne, Shovell's vice-admiral. He was asked for his opinion—not as to the best means of relieving the Imperialist position—but how best to protect trade, countenance Portugal, and at the same time secure the British coasts. He replied with a solid directness which shows that, if our seamen could not quite appreciate the diplomatic and political tangle with which the strategical problem was confused, they at least had not forgotten the time-honoured methods of cutting the knot. Louis, with his whole combination shaken by the defection of Portugal, and exposed to a disastrous blow in the Mediterranean, was endeavouring to get the Comte de Toulouse to sea from Toulon. All intelligence, Fairborne said, pointed to a concentration of the various French squadrons in Cadiz. His advice therefore was that Shovell should be reinforced from forty sail to sixty, with orders to bring the French fleet to action, even if he had to follow it into the jaws of Toulon.<sup>1</sup> It was sound and seamanlike advice, showing a lively appreciation of the elasticity of action, which the homogeneous organisation of a single main fleet afforded, and could it have been brought to effect the whole difficulties of the position would have been solved.

But, as it happened, before the arrival of the long-expected Dutch contingent allowed Shovell to sail, yet another new element in the situation had arisen. In the previous year the Protestants of the Cevennes mountains had risen in revolt, and, owing to Louis's preoccupation beyond his frontiers, the insurrection had reached alarming proportions. The revolted district lay in the hill country some forty miles north of Cette, the new port at which the Languedoc canal reached the sea, and stretched eastwards towards the frontier of Savoy. As Savoy was

<sup>1</sup> *Godolphin Correspondence, Add. MSS.* 28055, May 30, 1703.

beginning to show a more marked inclination to throw in her lot with the allies, the insurrection assumed a very serious strategical aspect. It was clear that, by co-operation from Savoy on the one side and from the sea on the other, the Cevennes might be developed into a barrier which would cut the French communications with Toulon and Italy, and seriously encumber those with Spain. It was mainly with a view of aggravating this situation that Rooke had been sent into the Bay of Biscay, but it was a situation that lent itself still better for well-directed naval action in the Mediterranean. It is no wonder therefore that when, about the time Shovell was hoisting his flag, a Cevennois agent appeared at the Hague and asked for assistance, the idea was warmly taken up.<sup>1</sup> Co-operation upon the coast of Languedoc was speedily arranged, and it was decided to reinforce Shovell with five of the line from the main fleet, provided the Dutch would agree to increase their contingent in proportion. Fresh instructions were sent him, directing that he was to make it his first business to get touch with the Cevennois in the Gulf of Narbonne, and furnish them with arms and munitions, and that above all he was to get away to the Mediterranean with all possible speed in order to convince the Duke of Savoy of the length of the sea powers' arm, and push him to a decision.<sup>2</sup>

Everything, it is clear to see, was still pointing to Toulon as the ultimate objective. It was at this time that Marlborough was endeavouring to negotiate a joint attack upon the place with the Duke of Savoy, and nothing could so well induce him to take the plunge as the support of the Cevennois revolt and the appearance of an allied

<sup>1</sup> Stanhope to Hedges, May 18–29, *S.P. Spain*, 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Admiralty, Secretary's Out-Letters*, 30, June 9; *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. June 16; *Life of Leake*, p. 65; De Jonge, iv. ii. 250.

squadron on his coasts. Owing however to Rooke's failure at Cadiz the main link in the necessary chain was still missing; but now arose a fresh chance of supplying it, which produced yet another change in Shovell's orders. In the last days of June, while he was still lying at Spithead, definite news arrived in London that Portugal had formally joined the Grand Alliance, and it was further known that the Toulon squadron was preparing to come through the Straits and deal her a blow while she yet lay unprotected. To the Tagus therefore the centre of gravity had for the moment definitely shifted. Seeing what Marlborough's views were of drastic action in the Mediterranean, to support Portugal on the terms of the new treaty of alliance was in his eyes a matter of vital importance. So clear to him was the necessity that he immediately offered to sacrifice his whole campaign in the Netherlands and remain upon the defensive, if troops could not otherwise be procured for Lisbon. It was in anticipation of this new situation that Godolphin had asked Fairborne's advice, and consequently, on the eve of sailing, Shovell was told, as Fairborne had suggested, that he was to be reinforced with eight of the line and that his whole proceedings were to be subordinated to the primary object of preventing the Toulon squadron passing the Straits and bringing it to action if it did.<sup>1</sup>

On July 1 Shovell at last put to sea. He would not wait for his reinforcements. They were to follow him to the Tagus under Admiral John Leake, a typical seaman officer, who was destined to hold a place of singular distinction among the founders of the British Mediterranean power. Having established his reputation at the relief

<sup>1</sup> Marlborough to Nottingham, June 14, *Despatches*, i. 117. Shovell's orders are in *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. June 29; and cf. *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 100.

of Londonderry by forcing the boom, he had been in active and successful employment ever since, and had just been promoted Vice-Admiral of the Blue. He was a man who could be trusted not to lose time. Shovell must have known as well as any one that he was already too late to execute a tithe of his complicated programme, which was still uncanceled. To follow his movements is needless. The only result of importance that he achieved was to deter the Toulon squadron from putting to sea. Louis, unable to believe that so small a part of the main fleet was to be attached to Shovell, gave up the game and ordered the Toulon squadron to be dismantled. The Portuguese were thus convinced of the capacity of the sea powers to protect them, and so far all was well.

The rest was a failure. Bound as he was to return in September, Shovell could barely reach Leghorn before it was time to turn homewards. What time he had was spent in trying to overawe the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Two vessels were also despatched to Narbonne, but the preconcerted signals were not answered, and they failed to get touch with the ill-fated Cevennois. A squadron too was detached under Byng, Shovell's rear-admiral, to visit the Barbary states; but, though they were civil enough, they would not commit themselves to a declaration of war. It was all that could be hoped for, seeing how Shovell's hands were tied. It is true that, some two months after he sailed, orders were sent him to leave behind him a squadron to clear out the Adriatic, where the French had been playing havoc with the Imperialist supplies; but even if they had reached him his fleet was too sickly for him to have been able to obey.<sup>1</sup> The whole design was hopeless from the first. Indeed we are told that when off Lisbon Shovell showed his orders to his

<sup>1</sup> *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 95, September 9.

colleague, Van Almonde, the Dutch admiral could hardly believe he had no others.<sup>1</sup> To complete the disappointments of the campaign his home-coming was marked with one of the most terrible disasters in our naval annals. As he lay in the Downs with his disease-stricken fleet, a storm of unprecedented fury fell upon it. Nine ships of the line were lost, besides four other vessels, with fifteen hundred hands, and half the rest that were saved were little better than wrecks.

In so appalling a visitation of Heaven his failure was condoned. Indeed, long before he could return with his fleet storm-torn and decimated by sickness, all interest in his movements had been lost. The Government was absorbed in developing its action from the new base it had acquired in Portugal. Savoy had joined the alliance, and already Marlborough, in concert with Eugene, was shaping that stupendous campaign which was to raise him to the highest rank of the great captains and for good and all to establish England as a Mediterranean power.

One day, as Shovell lay before Leghorn truculently showing the distracted Grand Duke how he stood between the devil and the deep sea, far away inland men were startled with the roar of his guns thundering over the marshes. He had been informed by the Imperial ambassador that the Austrian Archduke had been proclaimed Charles III., and in the heart of the Mediterranean, for all the world to hear, the maritime powers were saluting the Hapsburg King of Spain. Had Shovell been

<sup>1</sup> *Torrington Memoirs*, 119. Other authorities for the voyage are Leake's *Life* and that of Capt. Stephen Martin (*Navy Records Society*). Van Almonde's view of it is in De Jonge, iv. ii. 249 *et seq.* For the Narbonne episode see Charnock, *Biog. Navalis*, *sub voce* Robert Aires or Ayres, who was in command. Shovell's despatch from the Downs to Nottingham, giving an account of his whole action, is in *Add. MSS.* 29591, f. 213, November 17.

bombarding the port his guns could not have spoken with a louder voice. It had been an essential point, in the treaty under which Portugal entered the Grand Alliance, that the Archduke Charles should be landed at Lisbon, and thence, with an allied army and the fleet of England and Holland at his back, undertake in force the conquest of his new kingdom. The struggle was transformed. During the year 1703 France had shown herself more than capable of holding her own against the great coalition, but now all was changed. She was confronted with another land war, as far as possible removed from her base, added to those in the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany. For the allies, widely as the four seats of war were divided, all were held together and nourished by an overwhelming sea power, while at the same time, by the adherence of Savoy to her enemies, France found her own connecting link exposed to a blow from the sea which she had no means to parry.

It was on this basis that the memorable campaign of 1704 was designed—the grandest probably that up to that time had ever been conceived. Marlborough's heroic resolve was suddenly to shift his whole force from the Netherlands to the Danube, and so tear Bavaria from the arms of France and fling Louis back from the Imperial frontier. The project was still a secret even from the allies. The objectives of the fleet were scarcely less well hidden. In midwinter Rooke had started to carry the new King to Lisbon, and though he was once driven back by storms he eventually reached the Tagus by the end of February. It was a duty, though his force was but slender, that he found not 'too small for his character.' Transports with the promised troops accompanied or followed him, as the men could be got together, and in due season the bulk of the main fleet was to gather to his flag.

How far he knew this is uncertain. The whole plan of campaign was certainly not communicated to the Admiralty, and for a while at least it seems to have been kept even from Rooke. There exists a rough memorandum of about this time in Godolphin's hand, in which he notes for consideration how much of the Queen's intentions may be communicated to the Lord Admiral's Council with a view to their issuing the admiral's orders, and how much must be conveyed to Rooke in secret by a Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup> It was not till March that the design began to take shape. Marlborough had been over to Holland to arrange the preliminaries of his great move, and while there he had written to the Duke of Savoy to assure him that at his (the Duke's) request the Queen had decided to send a powerful fleet into the Mediterranean in the spring to support and facilitate his designs. The greater part of the ships, he said, were already at Lisbon, and he himself was going to make an important diversion which would effectually prevent the French increasing their force in Italy, or even, he added, against the Emperor.<sup>2</sup>

In the middle of March, about a fortnight after Marlborough's return from the Hague, we have the first secret draft of Rooke's final orders. He had already been informed that, besides operating on the coast of Spain in concert with the Portuguese, he might, if he saw his way, do the same on the coast of Provence with the assistance of Savoy. But now his instructions were made more definite. The French, in order to recover the position which they had lost by the adhesion of Savoy to the allies, were threatening Nice and Villafranca, the two Savoyard ports by which the Duke commanded the coastwise route from France into Italy and was in direct

<sup>1</sup> *Hatton-Finch Papers, Add. MSS. 29591, f. 252.*

<sup>2</sup> *Marlborough Despatches, ii. 231, February 10, 1704.*

touch with the maritime powers. Rooke was therefore to be informed that he was to hold himself in readiness to proceed to their relief at all hazards, and the moment he heard from Savoy that either place was in danger, he was to sail without waiting for his reinforcements to reach him.<sup>1</sup>

This draft is marked as having been read to Godolphin and Marlborough as though up to this time the secret was confined to them. Ten days later his instructions were drawn up and signed. Generally they were an exact repetition of those which Shovell had received the previous year, but with this difference, that Rooke's first duty was to relieve Nice in case it were besieged, and that, for fear of being too late, if a summons for help reached him, he was, if he possibly could, to enter the Mediterranean at once. To leave no doubt as to what the Government were aiming at, the formal instructions were accompanied by an 'explanation.' The Queen, he was told, desired above all things to have a fleet in the Mediterranean so as to be within striking distance of Nice at any moment. As for the rest of the campaign, she would leave it to the fleet council of war; but Rooke was to do his best to persuade his flag-officers that nowhere could they be so useful as in the Mediterranean. So long as they held that station Louis would be prevented from supporting or supplying his army in Italy by sea, while at the same time they would keep open the only line of communication which the Emperor had with his troops in Piedmont. As for assisting the Austrian party in Spain, which up to this time Rooke regarded as his main object, he could do it better by acting on the Mediterranean coast, and especially in Catalonia, than by any operations outside the Straits.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *H.O. Admiralty, xvi. 39 and ibid. xiii. March 14, 1704.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid. xiii. March 24, 1704.*

So far went Rooke's open instructions, which every one concerned was to know, and never before perhaps was the higher strategy of the Mediterranean more luminously formulated. In its breadth and firmness we feel the touch of Marlborough, the hand not only of the great general, but of the great war minister, who sees in their true proportions the scope and end of naval action. To the sailor the aim of naval strategy must always seem to be the command of the sea. To the soldier and the statesman it is only the means to an end. For them the end must always be the furtherance or the hindrance of military operations ashore, or the protection or destruction of sea-borne commerce; for by these means alone can governments and populations be crushed into submission. Of the two methods that of military pressure must always come first, where resources allow, just as an assault, where practicable, is always preferable to the more lengthy blockade. If, therefore, it be possible to give sudden emphasis to vital military operations by momentarily and without undue risk abandoning the sailor's preoccupation—by ceasing for a moment to aim solely at the command of the sea—a bigoted adherence to it may become pedantry and ruin the higher strategy of the campaign.

On these fundamental principles of warfare Rooke's instructions were framed, and framed in the best possible way. The portion of the far-reaching design which Marlborough wished Rooke to carry out was not forced upon the fleet. It was merely placed lucidly before the flag-officers that they might clearly perceive their place in the great whole so far as it could be safely disclosed. It was left to their judgment and loyalty to say how far the limitations of their art enabled them to carry into effect what the Government looked to them to perform.

Moreover, although the military exigencies of the situation were pressed upon them, their own immediate concern was not forgotten. From the spies and agents of the admirable intelligence system, which was then in existence, was flowing a constant stream of reports of French naval activity both in Toulon and the western ports. The secret of their intentions had not been penetrated. The reports variously pointed to a concentration either in the Mediterranean or in the Atlantic, or possibly to separate squadrons acting in each arena.<sup>1</sup> To meet this uncertain situation the last clause of Rooke's instructions informed him that he was to prevent a junction of the Toulon and 'West France' squadrons, and that, if the Toulon squadron got out of the Straits, it was to be his first duty to follow it and bring it to action. This in fact was a naval condition to which every military necessity must subserve.

The brilliance and lucidity of the whole design come out still more clearly when we consider what were Rooke's secret instructions and how admirably the open ones were constructed to prepare the way for their execution. As the campaign existed in the minds of Eugene and Marlborough, it was to rest upon a secret and sudden concentration against what may be called the right flank of the French at the Danube. At their opposite flank was to be a minor attack or diversion in the form of an invasion of Spain by Portugal and the Hapsburg King. Though this movement was to receive the support of the fleet, it was not Rooke's main object. The memorable and unexpected fruit of his campaign has long ago obscured what that object was. It was in truth nothing less than the fruition of Marlborough's long-pondered design. It was upon Toulon—the French centre as we may regard it—that the weight of his force was to be thrown. There, by a

<sup>1</sup> *Admiralty Secretary, In-Letters*, vol. 3930.

sudden and secret blow in concert of the Duke of Savoy's army, he was to seize and destroy the seat of the French Mediterranean power. Not a soul was to be informed; but, so long as the Duke of Savoy held to the project, Rooke was to regard the operation as taking precedence of everything else, excepting only the relief of Nice and the shadowing of the Toulon fleet if it got out of the Straits. The operations on the Spanish Mediterranean coast were to extend no further than was desirable for masking the real objective. So soon as the blow at Toulon had been struck he was to set about reaping the fruit of the victory by proceeding direct to Palermo. There, by using private signals with which he was furnished, he was to get into communication with the Austrian party and endeavour with their co-operation to induce the city to declare for the Hapsburg King. The same was to be done at Messina, and from these points he might endeavour to reduce the whole of Sicily, and subsequently, with the same end in view, proceed to Naples.<sup>1</sup>

Such in its entirety was the grand design of this memorable year. We have only to bear in mind the leading idea of the main attack upon the Danube to see how each part assists and amplifies the rest. The ambitious programme assigned to Rooke was of course scarcely practicable, and it depended too much upon the unstable factor of Savoy. Still it must not be dismissed as a dream. We should take it rather as an indication of the incalculable power of strategical disturbance that lies open to a Mediterranean fleet. By judicious handling of his force and a clear grasp of the situation it was in Rooke's power to contain at least four French armies, and to prevent support being sent from any of the points

<sup>1</sup> *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. March 29, 1704, and *ibid.* xvi. 123 *et seq.*

that lay within the length of his arm, to the vital battleground in Central Europe.

It was, as we have seen, in the last days of March that Rooke's orders were settled, and before a week was out Marlborough was at Harwich waiting for a wind to carry him across to Holland that he might set in motion the vast machinery which he and Eugene had adjusted. Rooke was already at work. Early in March Leake arrived in the Tagus from England with a combined English and Dutch squadron. Rooke had put to sea at once, and in accordance with his first instructions had spread his fleet in cruising formation between Capes St. Vincent and Espartel with the threefold object of covering the English Levant trade in its passage through the Straits, intercepting some enemy's ships expected from Buenos Ayres, and preventing men-of-war slipping out from Toulon to join the squadrons in the West France ports.<sup>1</sup> Though the Buenos Ayres vessels were missed in dirty weather, two ships of the line were taken, and towards the end of April Rooke had returned to Lisbon. There he found his new orders awaiting him, and communicated them, so far as they were not secret, to his council of war. In concert with his Dutch colleague a decision was quickly arrived at. It was agreed to proceed immediately into the Mediterranean and pass as high as Barcelona with the double object of supporting the Hapsburg party in Catalonia, and being at hand to relieve Nice and Villafranca if they should call for assistance. Rooke's real object was of course to get unsuspected within striking distance of Toulon, but of this he said not a word, nor of Sicily and Naples, although Charles was very anxious that a demonstration should be made there as well as off Barcelona. With the Dutch contingent Rooke had some

<sup>1</sup> *Torrington Memoirs*, 127.

forty sail, and with them he entered the Straits in the first days of May, and watered by force in Altea Bay.<sup>1</sup>

In Toulon, according to the intelligence which the Government had, a fleet of about thirty of the line was being brought forward for the Comte de Toulouse—a force which would probably be about equal to that of Rooke, at least on paper—and it was believed to be the intention of the French to pass it out of the Straits and endeavour to form a concentration at Cadiz with the Atlantic divisions from Brest, Port Louis, and Rochefort—together scarcely inferior to the Toulon squadron. This Atlantic or 'West France' squadron was to be dealt with by the Channel squadron under Shovell, with Fairborne and Byng for his flag-officers. Shovell had also the charge of the mass of trade proceeding southwards, and of the stores for Rooke and the transports for Lisbon. About the middle of April, on an alarm that the Brest squadron was coming out, he received sudden orders to hoist his flag and get to sea. If he found the news was true and that the French were in superior force, he was to retreat with all his convoy into the Thames; otherwise he was to proceed off Brest, and if the squadron was still there he was to send on the trade and transports under convoy and devote his fleet to preventing a concentration of the three 'West France' divisions. If however he found the Brest division had sailed and had reason to believe its destination was the Straits, he was to detach in chase a force that would make Rooke superior; and if it were necessary to detach the greater part of his fleet, he himself was to go in command and place himself under Rooke's flag.<sup>2</sup>

Here then again we have the British naval strategy

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Sir John Leake*, p. 77; *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 127; *Capt. Stephen Martin*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Torrington Memoirs*, 122.

resting firmly on the fundamental idea which William III. had inaugurated, that the Channel and Mediterranean squadron must be regarded as one main fleet, to be used wholly or in part either within or without the Straits as the distribution of the enemy's force demanded. Marlborough, who alone of Englishmen appears to have grasped the true potentialities of the Mediterranean, had at last got his way, and at the outset he was employing that very policy which we regard as among the latest and highest developments of modern naval thought.

With these well-conceived instructions Shovell put to sea, and by the middle of May, with his whole charge, was off the Lizard, his first rendezvous. Here he received intelligence from the Admiralty that Toulouse himself had suddenly arrived at Brest and taken the squadron to sea a fortnight since, and as the news was confirmed by his own scouts he resolved to carry on and feel for Toulouse in the Soundings. Finding no trace of him there he concluded he must have gone for the Straits. According to his orders he therefore gave chase in person with the bulk of his force.

Nothing, it will be observed, was said in Shovell's instructions of the secret object of Rooke's fleet. The fact was that the situation had changed in a way that necessarily modified the original design. When Hill, who was charged with the negotiations with Savoy, reached Turin at the beginning of April, he found the Duke had grown ominously cool about the projected attempt on Toulon. The Dutch, who were stubbornly bent on keeping their fleet to protect their commerce, had informed the Duke that they were averse to engaging it in so desperate an adventure, and he demanded a definite assurance that Rooke would come, and come soon. Hill said all he could and promised the Duke two hundred

thousand crowns so soon as Toulon was in flames. But all was in vain. It soon became known that the French had abandoned their designs on Nice and Villafranca, and that the troops raised for the purpose were being sent to reinforce the army of Italy. The result was that the Duke found it impossible to spare enough troops to act with the fleet, and Hill had to send word to Rooke that there was no hope of Savoy's co-operating with him in Provence.

This unwelcome news arrived home as Shovell was passing down Channel collecting his fleet, and it was at once sent on to Rooke. He was further informed that the Imperialist forces in Italy were so few and bad that it was useless to attempt to co-operate with such material. He was therefore to fall back in order to concert operations with the Archduke Charles and the King of Portugal on the coast of Spain, and above all to intercept Toulouse if he got away from Brest and attempted to enter the Straits. At the same time he was informed of Shovell's orders and told to look out for him.<sup>1</sup>

Marlborough, who thus saw one half of his grand design wiped clean away, received the news with his usual cheery good humour. He had already reached Ladenburg in the heart of Germany with his cavalry. In ten days he hoped to be on the Danube, and the meaning of his heroic move was apparent to all concerned. In his answer he contented himself with approving the step that had been taken and with warning the Government, which was nervous about an attack on the English coast, of what Toulouse's intention most probably was. 'There is no doubt,' he wrote, 'of his being gone from Brest, but I am apt to think his orders are to sail directly to Cadiz, so that I am glad care is taken to reinforce Sir George Rooke,

<sup>1</sup> Hill's despatches, April 11-18, *S.P. Foreign, Savoy*, 26; Rooke's instructions, May 9, *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 148.

and that he has fresh orders to co-operate with the Portugal troops on the coast of Spain; for I fear, without the assistance of our naval force, we shall not be able to make any great progress at present on that side.'<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, as the great symphony developed, Rooke, in accordance with his secret orders, had moved on to make his feint at Barcelona. He was still ignorant of the altered conditions when he anchored in the Bay, and no one but himself knew what his real intention was. Hesse, who was with the fleet, was as ignorant as the rest, and as eager as ever to decide the campaign with his beloved Catalans. He had been assured that he had only to appear before the place for his friends to rise and declare for Charles III. So sure was he of his power that on the way he had persuaded Rooke to make something more than a demonstration, and permit him to land the marines and bring the smouldering insurrection to a head. This was accordingly done. Barcelona was summoned in the name of the Hapsburg King, but for answer Hesse got nothing but defiance. There is no reason to believe that his information was false, but he had not calculated on the personality of the governor, Don Francisco de Velasco. This man, by the ascendancy of his character and adroit tact, was able to keep under the disaffected element and to inspire his adherents with his own determination. He pointed out the smallness of the force that had landed, and that the Archduke had not had the courage to come in person. The result was that not a man moved. A bombardment was tried, but that only made matters worse and turned lukewarmness to exasperation. It was clear the experiment had been miscalculated, and Rooke, after letting Hesse try his hand for a fortnight,

<sup>1</sup> To Sir Charles Hedges, June 4, *Despatches*, i. 295.

would wait no longer and insisted on re-embarking his men for his main design.<sup>1</sup>

For the failure therefore at Barcelona Rooke was in no way to blame. For him the whole affair was only a feint, though, seeing what the information was, he certainly exercised a wise discretion in permitting Hesse to turn the feint into a *coup de main* if he could. He was equally wise in refusing to allow him to continue the operation for any length of time. He was still secretly bent on Toulon, nor did he give a hint of his intention beyond detaching Rear-Admiral Wilks with a small division to look into the port. The rendezvous he gave was the Hyères islands, and his council of war believed they were going as far as Nice and Villafranca, to see them safe and then to return and attack Barcelona in force. His real object was of course to get into communication with Hill in order to concert operations with the Savoyard army. Whether he did so or not is uncertain, nor can we tell whether or not he had by this time received his amended orders. All we know is that at Hyères he heard from Methuen, the Ambassador at Lisbon, that the Brest fleet had passed the Tagus on its way to Toulon. The council of war immediately determined that this fleet must now be their sole objective, and, without waiting a day, Rooke sent word to Hill that he was turning back to meet Toulouse.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, *War of Succession*, i. 97; Duro, *Armada Española*, vi. 51; *Torrington Memoirs*, 127; *Life of Leake*, 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Rooke's Voyage*, 1704, Brit. Mus. 816, m. 23, pp. 179 *et seq.*

## CHAPTER XXXI

### GIBRALTAR AND MALAGA

WITH the change of front which had been forced upon Rooke and the British Government a practically new naval campaign commences. Owing to the inability of Savoy or the Imperialists in Italy to provide the necessary military element, the elaborate design which Marlborough had formed for breaking into the centre of Louis's widespread position had to go by the board. Without the co-operation of an adequate military force Rooke could do nothing. It was only on the extreme opposite flank to that upon which Marlborough was closing that this condition existed. True, the army of the allies in the Peninsula was weak and unsatisfactory enough; still, as they stood, it was the only point where naval and military co-operation could be brought into play, and it was therefore only in this quarter of the vast field of hostilities that Rooke could hope to make the enemy feel the smart of his command of the sea.

For the moment, however, that command was threatened. By the escape of the Brest squadron Rooke was in danger of finding himself in inferior force at the vital point, and his sole and immediate object became the defeat of that squadron in order to prevent its junction with that of Toulon. It was now a purely naval question, with which Rooke was quite at home, and, rightly disregarding all political and military distractions, he

spread his cruisers to get touch with Toulouse. With his council of war he had settled the exact course they were to pursue. If the enemy was sighted before they reached the Straits they were to do their utmost to deal him a blow; if not, they were to hurry on to Cadiz and seek an occasion of bringing him to action there. If he refused they were to proceed to Lisbon, to meet Shovell and replenish with stores. They knew that Toulouse's intention was to join hands with the squadron which he expected to come out of Toulon to meet him, and they believed that, whether the combined French fleet entered the Straits or attempted anything on the Portuguese coast, they would be in a position to give a good account of it.<sup>1</sup>

It was not long before their action was decided for them. On the second day after the council the scouts signalled the enemy in sight, and on the morrow the two fleets were in contact. The French, to the number of about fifty, with thirty-one of the line, were to windward, and as they formed line of battle Rooke went about to the northward to cut them off from Toulon. Though the French were slightly superior, they refused an engagement and held on for their destination, and being clean they soon began to show their heels to Rooke's foul fleet. All that day, however, he struggled on. The next the weather fell almost calm, and it became clear that nothing could prevent the French admiral making Toulon if he chose, and that Rooke's only chance of bringing him to action was in the mouth of the port where the allies would be exposed to an overwhelming attack from both the French squadrons. It was therefore resolved to

<sup>1</sup> De Jonge, iv. ii. 293, quoting the Dutch 'Minutes of the Joint Council of War held on board H.M.S. "Royal Catherine," off the Hyères Islands, May 25, 1704 (o.s.)'

abandon the chase and make the best of their way to join Shovell in the Tagus preparatory to further action.<sup>1</sup>

The French had fairly won the first round of the game. But Shovell was speeding southwards, and a few days later he put into the Tagus for water and provisions so as to be ready to get to sea the moment he received a summons from Rooke. Here, however, he heard what had happened. Toulouse had entered the Straits, and, fearing Rooke might be overpowered, he very properly decided to go in search of him without waiting for orders. Thus it was that on June 16, just as Marlborough was joining hands with the Margrave of Baden, Rooke and Shovell met off Cape St. Mary, and at both extremities of the French position the situation was ripe for the catastrophe.

Had the admirals been left to themselves they would have been in no doubt what to do. They were all in favour of holding to the resolution taken off Hyères and entering the Straits in search of the now united French fleet. But there were political considerations which complicated the problem. Their last orders were to co-operate with the Kings of Spain and Portugal in supporting the land war in the Peninsula, and it became necessary to send into Lisbon to know what was required of them. At the same time Toulouse's fleet in Toulon remained their chief consideration, and while awaiting an answer they resolved to get into the best position they could for dealing with it if it moved. To this end, as Marlborough was in the act of defeating the Bavarians at Schellenberg and securing his passage of the Danube, they decided to enter the Straits and water by force at Malaga. There they would be well placed, both for engaging Toulouse if he attempted

<sup>1</sup> De Jonge, iv. ii. 294, from the Journals and Despatches of the Dutch admirals, and *Life of Leake*, p. 80.

to reach Cadiz, or to go to the rescue of Nice or any other port of the allies if he intended a stroke in that quarter.

Nothing could have been better under the circumstances. The two kings appear to have had no objection to the movement, and had contented themselves with requesting that on its way to the Straits the fleet would attempt something on the coast of Andalusia. Cadiz was the place particularly indicated in the admirals' instructions, and this they knew was what the two kings would most like to see undertaken. They had therefore expressed their willingness to attack the place if sufficient troops could be provided to act with them. Now Shovell had already ascertained at Lisbon that it was extremely unlikely that such troops would be forthcoming, and they had therefore every reason to believe that the answer from Lisbon would set them free to proceed up the Straits and devote themselves to bringing Toulouse to action.<sup>1</sup>

For a week baffling easterly gales prevented their entering the Mediterranean. A further delay was caused by false intelligence that a French squadron had taken advantage of the weather to slip through and had got into Cadiz. Nor was it till July 7 that they reached Malaga and seized the watering places. When the whole fleet was watered, Rooke put to sea, and, while waiting for his answer from Lisbon, occupied the entrance of the Straits in readiness for Toulouse if he appeared. In a week the answer came and the memorable council of war of July 17 was called to consider it.

The proposal of the two kings, as the admirals expected, was for an attack on Cadiz, but as no troops could be promised it was promptly rejected. Then it was that in considering how best to pursue their own

<sup>1</sup> *Torrington Memoirs*, pp. 128, 129.

object, and at the same time to satisfy their instructions and the expectations of the two kings, the momentous word was spoken. Dim in the distance glimmered the Rock of Gibraltar. For a century past it had shone enticingly in English eyes; for half a century it had been an admitted end of their endeavour. Cromwell had stretched out his hand to it. Under Charles II. English careening hulks had been stationed there in preference to Tangier. William III. had marked it for his own, and had never ceased in peace or war to work for its possession; and since his death every admiral that had sailed for the Straits had been instructed to capture it if he could.

From whom the suggestion came we know not, but it matters little; for by this time the idea had become a commonplace both in the cabinet and the service. It is generally attributed to Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt, who was with the fleet still in hope of effecting something in Catalonia. Sir John Leake, the vice-admiral of Rooke's squadron, says that he himself had proposed it to the Prince some time before 'as the most advantageous conquest that could be made for the benefit of the trade as well as the fleet during a war with France and Spain,' but that it could not be undertaken till the two kings had agreed not to attempt Cadiz.<sup>1</sup> We know, at any rate, that a memorandum from Hesse was laid before the council of war, as soon as the decision of the kings was known. If it did not contain the formal proposal, it was certainly Hesse's sanction that was the decisive factor. It is the custom of historians to credit England's possession of the gate of the Mediterranean to Rooke's fearlessness of responsibility. But as a matter of fact so long as he had the sanction of King Charles's

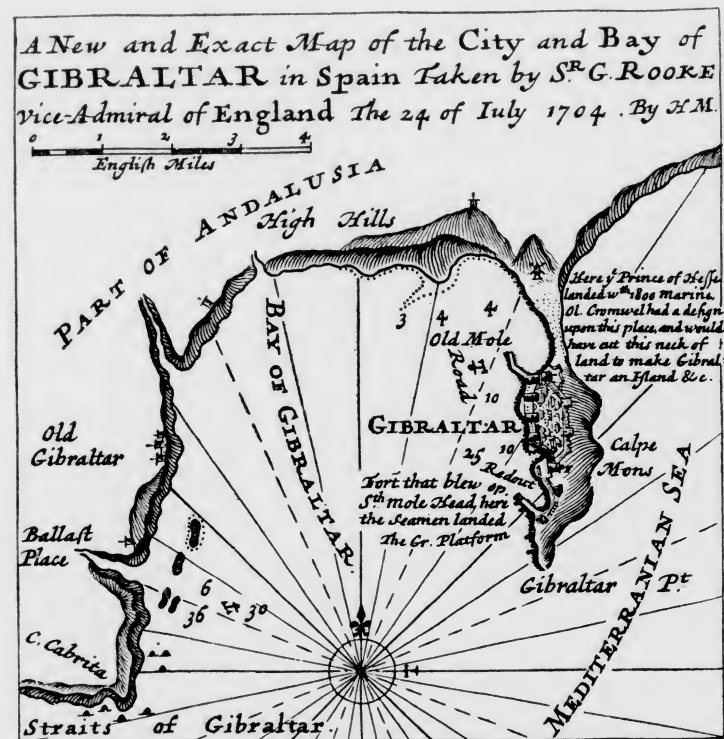
<sup>1</sup> Leake's *Life*, p. 83.

representative, he was incurring no responsibility at all. No one knew better than he, as William's most trusted naval councillor, how long Gibraltar had been the secret and the open aim of successive English governments. He knew the weakness of the place, and his own strength was overwhelming. By the Queen's instructions he had full authority to undertake the operation; he had been requested by the two kings to attempt some place on the Andalusian coast; and he actually had in his pocket a proclamation by Charles III. to his city of Gibraltar, telling them the British admiral was going to call with his fleet to receive their submission.<sup>1</sup> All that he required was to satisfy his last caution from home about acting only by consent of the two kings, and this consent had been given by Hesse's action. If he had not seized so favourable a chance of retrieving his waning reputation and of saving another barren campaign, it would have been sheer madness. Still, he must not be denied the credit of having overcome some opposition. Byng, who was Shovell's vice-admiral, has left it on record that the proposal 'was lightly thought of by many at the council.' He himself was one of them. But to his and his friends' objections Rooke had sharply replied that not only should the place be attempted, but that Byng himself, the leader of the opposition, should conduct the attack.<sup>2</sup>

So much and no more was the height of Rooke's decision; nor as a feat of arms was his exploit more lofty. Renowned as that exploit became at the time for political reasons at home, and afterwards for its lasting effects on history, the truth is there was nothing in it heroic either in the resolution of the admiral or in the

<sup>1</sup> Lopez de Ayala, *Hist. of Gibraltar* (trans. James Bell), p. 136, where the proclamation is set out.

<sup>2</sup> Torrington Memoirs, p. 137.



The Bay is very fair and almost like a Haven landlocked for a West wind; but a South west wind bloweth right in, a South wind comes from y<sup>e</sup> top of y<sup>e</sup> Mountain of Gibraltar. to Anchor in this Bay you must sail so far in that y<sup>e</sup> innermost Point of Gibraltar bears about East from you, then you will have 5 or 6 Fathom. Clear ground y<sup>e</sup> Ebbing and Flowing is about 3 or 4 Foot. in sailing with an Easterly wind from y<sup>e</sup> Road of Gibraltar you should bear up toward y<sup>e</sup> West shore; for tis scarce possible you can get out of y<sup>e</sup> Bay along y<sup>e</sup> high land because y<sup>e</sup> Easterly winds fall with such whirlings from the Hills of Gibraltar

#### GIBRALTAR

FROM 'A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA,'  
BY SIR HENRY SHERE, 1705

difficulty of its execution. Gibraltar at this time was little more than it had been throughout the middle ages, a third-rate seaport town with works designed to secure it against the Barbary pirates. Charles V. had constructed the wall which included the Rock in the defended area, and Philip II. had added a bastion or two. Philip IV., it is true, had done something more. Till his time it had had nothing but a galley harbour under the Old Mole. By constructing to the south of the town what was called the New Mole, he had provided it with a shelter for ships. Under him it had consequently increased substantially in population and prosperity, and during his war with Charles I. he had partially modernised the fortifications. But this only meant that the mediæval battlements had been replaced by parapets, and the towers cut down to the level of the curtains and filled in solidly with the rubbish.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it may be doubted whether some of these improvements, by extending the lines to be guarded, were not at the moment a source of weakness rather than strength, seeing how slender was the garrison. There was not even a citadel: for the old Moorish castle had been dismantled and nothing had yet replaced it; while of the modern works recently designed by the French engineers not one had been carried out. The regular force that held it at the time had been reduced to under a hundred men, and with all the local militia which the governor could collect he could not raise a garrison of five hundred. Against Rooke's force, with its five and forty of the line, its frigates, fire-ships, and bomb-vessels, its two thousand marines and its overwhelming weight of metal, such a place was but a nutshell.

<sup>1</sup> Lopez de Ayala, *op. cit.*, and Luis Bravo's official report made in 1627. *Add. MSS.* 15152. This manuscript contains large plans and sketches in water-colour of the condition of the fortress as it then existed.

The contemptible condition of the fortress was well known in the fleet, and this indeed may have been the reason why the attempt was thought of so lightly by Byng and his friends; but Rooke had always the grand manner, and he approached it with all the pomp and circumstance of a great operation. In Tangier Bay, hard by the ruined mole under which he had helped to bury the hopes of the older Mediterranean school, the elaborate preparations for the attack were made. In four days they were complete, and on July 21 the fleet stood over to Gibraltar Bay. Byng and the Dutch rear-admiral Vanderdussen led the way with the battering squadron of seventeen of the line and three bomb-vessels, and the following day came to anchor about a mile from the town. Rooke followed with the rest of the fleet and the marines of Byng's squadron, and brought to further in the bay towards Point Mala. Here in the mouth of the little river Guadarran the British marines, eighteen hundred strong, were landed under Hesse without opposition, and at once marched to the north front of the town, where they took up a position across the isthmus from sea to sea, so as entirely to cut off Gibraltar from the mainland. It was here, as was called to mind, that Cromwell had intended to cut his canal, and the investment was complete. It had been arranged however that Byng was not to open fire until the garrison had been summoned by Hesse, and, accordingly, from the position he had seized, the Prince sent in a trumpet together with King Charles's proclamation.

No answer was received that night, and next morning Byng signalled for the line of battle. While it was forming the governor's reply arrived. It was a sturdy defiance and a chivalrous declaration that he meant to hold the place for the King to whom he had sworn

allegiance. On hearing the result Rooke reinforced the battering squadron with five more of the line, bringing it up to twenty-two. Byng disposed his force in a line stretching from the old mole to the new one. He himself, with a division of ten sail, occupied the centre opposite the town and south bastion. Northward of him was the Dutch division of six sail before the old mole, while to the southward, facing the new mole and its defences, was an English division of six under Captain Jasper Hickee of the 'Yarmouth.' Outward of the line were the three bomb-vessels. As there was no wind, every one had to warp into position. The work proceeded all night, and by daybreak they were so close in that Byng had only a foot or two under his keel. As the first light of day revealed what had happened, the shore batteries opened. Byng promptly replied, and with so furious and well-sustained a fire that in a few minutes nothing could be seen but a stream of panic-stricken inhabitants hurrying out of the town towards the southernmost point of the Rock. It was the women and children flying for safety to Our Lady of Europa. There all that terrible Sunday morning, in the sanctuary of the old Mediterranean power, they cowered and prayed beneath the trophies of the great galley admirals while the roar of Byng's guns sounded in their ears the knell of the dead past.

Towards one o'clock the thunder of the bombardment sank into silence. It had lasted nearly six hours, and Byng had ordered a cessation to see what the effect had been. But for the fugitives a new terror quickly succeeded the first. Captain Whitaker of the 'Dorsetshire' had been sent down the line to convey the orders to cease fire, and by the time he reached the 'Lennox,' which lay nearest to the new mole, both he and her captain, William

Jumper, could see that most of the guns in the works that defended it were dismounted and the garrison had apparently fled. Whitaker promptly hurried back to Byng with the opinion that the forts and mole might be seized. It was no part of the design, but Byng did not hesitate. Signalling for all the boats of his own line, he sent Whitaker off to Rooke to ask for the rest. Without waiting for a reply, however, he despatched Captain Hickes with his own flotilla, under orders to land to the southward of the mole head, and endeavour to take possession.

Shortly afterwards Whitaker came back with word that Rooke had consented to the attack and that he himself was to command it. But, before he could get up to the mole, Hickes and Jumper were already well on their way, and the distracted suppliants of Our Lady of Europa, seeing the new danger, were streaming in terror towards the town. A gun or two headed them back, and under a misapprehension that it was a signal to re-open fire, the bombardment broke out again. Under cover of it Hickes and Jumper landed their men. Resistance there was none. During all this time Hesse and his marines had been vigorously assaulting the north front. It was consequently impossible to spare reinforcements for the garrison of the new mole, and, fearing to be cut off, they had retired into the town. Still the loss was severe. As the seamen recklessly rushed into the abandoned works with their matches burning in their hands, they exploded a magazine, killing or wounding about a hundred men, besides sinking a number of the boats.<sup>1</sup> Every one believed it was a mine that had been sprung, and for a moment there was a panic. But Whitaker's flotilla came up immediately, and with renewed spirit the whole landing force pressed northward

<sup>1</sup> Pococke's Journal in *Torrington Memoirs*, App. p. 193.

along the sea wall. At a bastion half way between the new mole and the great or south bastion at the southernmost point of the town, they were compelled to halt, for there Charles V.'s wall barred their way. Here, therefore, and in the other works that he had taken, Whitaker was content to secure himself, while, by arrangement between Hesse and Rooke, a fresh summons was sent in simultaneously from both forces.

It demanded the surrender of the fortress in half an hour on pain of the last severities of war. All that loyalty could demand had been done; the women and children with Our Lady of Europa were at the sailors' mercy; and the governor decided to capitulate. On the morrow the articles were signed; the women and children were reverently escorted into the care of their own people in the town, and the defenders were allowed to march out with all the honours of war. So at last, after so many years of longing, the gate of the Mediterranean was in British hands, the sanctuary of Europa had been stripped bare by Rooke's seamen, and the lamps of the Dorias and the Colonnas were resting in the ship-chests of Jumper and his friends.<sup>1</sup>

Gibraltar was taken, and, to add to the rejoicing, a

<sup>1</sup> The fullest accounts of the exploit will be found in the *Torrington Memoirs*, pp. 138-145; in Chaplain Pococke's Journal (*ibid.* pp. 190-5); and in the despatch of the governor, Don Diego de Salinas, to the Marques de Villadrias (Duro, vi. 63, Appendix). The other official Spanish documents are printed by Ayala (*op. cit.* Appendices xi.-xiv.). There is an old story that the flag of Charles III. was hoisted by some one when the place was taken, and that Rooke ordered it to be struck and the British flag to be hoisted in its place. I can find no confirmation of this improbable tale. Modern Spanish authorities reject it (Duro, vi. 58, *n.*). Rooke had orders to act strictly as Charles's agent, and the garrison was certainly summoned in Charles's name. The origin of the story may lie in the fact that the sailors planted the British flag on the works they took before the final summons and capitulation. It may well be that, when all was settled, Rooke ordered it to be removed, and so the perverted legend might have arisen (*Torrington Memoirs*, 143; see also *post*, p. 264, note).

frigate came in at the moment of victory with news of Marlborough's success at Schellenberg and his capture of Donauwörth. It also brought letters from home, and from Methuen at Lisbon which were less welcome. To take Gibraltar was one thing, to keep it another. Toulouse's fleet was still unbeaten, and Wilks, with a squadron of observation, was cruising off Malaga on the look-out for it. The letters just to hand, however, gave Rooke to understand that Toulouse was in so great an inferiority to himself that there was little likelihood of his venturing out of Toulon.<sup>1</sup> He was therefore urged once more to attempt either Cadiz or Barcelona. Barcelona was quickly rejected by the council of war on the old plea that it was too late in the year to proceed so far up the Straits; but as for Cadiz, they felt bound to declare they were ready to co-operate until the middle of September, but no longer, and that only if an adequate force and siege-train were provided by the two kings as well as a garrison for Gibraltar. Such an answer was practically a refusal to do anything but maintain the conquest they had made. In this they were rightly absorbed, and to secure it they resolved to remain in the Straits till an answer came from Lisbon, and in the meanwhile to water the fleet by squadrons on the Barbary coast. It would seem that the admirals themselves were by no means easy about Toulouse, in spite of the sanguine views of the home Government. The reckless bombardment had made a serious hole in their magazines; they were obliged to send Vanderdussen with five sail to Plymouth to fetch some Dutch transports with reinforcements for Portugal; another squadron had been detached to the Azores to bring in the Brazil convoy, and they may well have doubted

<sup>1</sup> *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. July 4, 1704 (o.s.). It was received with Methuen's of the 21st and 28th (n.s.) on July 24, *Torrington Memoirs*, 146.

whether they were really so superior as to deter Toulouse from hazarding an action.

As a matter of fact the information which the English Government had sent was incorrect. Instead of having only forty of the line at his disposal, as they believed, Toulouse, in spite of every difficulty that was put in his way, had succeeded in getting fifty-one ready for sea, besides a score of galleys. On the other hand, Rooke, instead of having sixty as they thought at home, had now only forty-one English and twelve Dutch of the line. He had nothing to set against the galleys, which were still regarded as formidable in giving mobility to a fleet in calms or light airs and against crippled ships at the end of an action. He was therefore really in inferior force, and so far from Toulouse being afraid to come out, he had actually put to sea a week before Rooke appeared at Gibraltar. His destination was Barcelona, which the French Court had been made to believe was Rooke's real objective, and there he expected to find the allied fleet, or at least to learn its position. Of what was happening in the Straits he was entirely ignorant, nor was it till he made Barcelona that he heard the stunning news that Gibraltar had fallen. He could be at no loss what to do, for awaiting him were orders from Madrid that without a moment's delay he was to proceed to the Straits. The sudden loss of the bulwark of the Spanish monarchy, he was told, had filled the Court with dismay. Already an army was on its march to the rescue, and between them they were to retake the renowned fortress, cost what it might.<sup>1</sup> We may well imagine the alarm that prevailed. In the minds of Spaniards Gibraltar was associated with the evil days, when it was the well-head from which Moorish conquest had flowed over the Peninsula. Its second fall was

<sup>1</sup> De Jonge, iv. ii. 306.

ominous of a new heretic dominion, and, sped by the prayers and terror of the faithful, the deliverer hurried again to sea.

Marlborough's great symphony had reached its fullest swell. Feverish as was the excitement in Spain, the worst was not yet known. Far away on the banks of the Danube a still more resounding blow had been struck. As Toulouse sped southward in search of Rooke, Marlborough and Eugene were crushing the most splendid of Louis's armies, and in Blenheim village the white flag was flying over the flower of his troops.

Meanwhile Rooke, having secured his conquest as best he could, had passed over to Tetuan. Gibraltar had been left to the care of Hesse and the British marines, and, screened by a squadron of scouts, the admiral was anxiously watering in hourly expectation of disturbance from Toulon.<sup>1</sup> Owing to the swell that prevailed the operation took nearly a week to perform. It was not till August 8 that he weighed to return to Gibraltar, and even then a dozen unwatered ships had to be left behind. That night, with light easterly airs, he held across the Straits, still in ignorance of Toulouse's movement; but at break of day one of the scouts to windward was seen making the signal for an enemy's fleet. Byng, who was the first to see it, immediately hurried aboard the flagship to impart the unexpected news. Sir James Wishart, Rooke's first captain, was for retiring at once into Gibraltar Bay to cover the threatened fortress. Byng, however, vigorously protested against so wrong-headed a proceeding. To say nothing of the folly of receiving the French at anchor, the movement would enable Toulouse to cut off the squadron that

<sup>1</sup> De Jonge points out that, as the Dutch admirals made no objection to the fortress being occupied by a garrison that was entirely British, there can hardly have been any dispute about the flag (*op. cit.* iv. ii. 305).

was still watering at Tetuan. Unable to decide, Rooke made the signal for the line of battle, and, while it was being formed, summoned the council of war. It proved as eager as Byng for a bold offensive. Most of the flag-officers were unable to believe that Toulouse meant to fight, the more so as there was still no sign of his coming down. To confirm their views the scouts presently reported that he was making off in the direction of Malaga. The decision therefore was to endeavour to get half the marines back on board the fleet, and then, so long as the wind held where it was, to lie in the open water to the east of Gibraltar to await the French and cover the place against any attempt Toulouse might make to recover it. If, on the other hand, the wind came westerly, they were to follow the French as far as Malaga, but no further. For if they were not found there it would be pretty certain they had retired as usual to Toulon, whither it was too late in the season to follow them.

All that day, therefore, and the following night they held on in battle order to the northward, Shovell and Leake in the van, Rooke and Byng in the centre, and the Dutch in the rear. Meanwhile Hesse had handsomely met Rooke's request for the marines, and next morning the fire-ships and sloops from Gibraltar appeared with a thousand of them instead of only half. As soon as they were distributed, Rooke went about to the southward to pick up the twelve ships that had been left on the Barbary coast. The sound of the French signal guns, which all through the night had been growing more distant, had ceased altogether, and though the wind was fair for their coming down, not a sign of them could be seen. Towards evening Rooke made up his mind that Toulouse must be trying to get away from him, and, taking in the signal for the line of battle, he ordered a chase to windward.

The wind held fresh from the eastward, and for two days he beat against it in long boards across the mouth of the Straits under a press of sail, and still not a sign of the enemy could be seen beyond one small vessel which the frigates chased ashore. During the next night it would seem that Wishart's anxiety for Gibraltar increased, and a fear arose that Toulouse by the help of his galleys might have slipped past inshore, and if so he would have the half-repaired fortress and all the fleet auxiliaries at his mercy. At daybreak therefore on August 12 a fresh council was called, at which it was agreed that, as it was clearly hopeless to close with Toulouse if he meant to get away, it was best to bear up for the Straits, lie there for two days more, and then if the French did not appear to devote their whole force to putting Gibraltar in a condition to defend itself. So, in no hope of a fight, the council broke up. But scarcely were the flag-officers aboard their ships again and the new course set, when the whole French fleet was sighted off Cape Malaga to the north-west of them and to leeward, speeding before the wind towards Gibraltar.

Then the truth flashed upon them. To abandon his mission was far from Toulouse's mind. The meaning of his retrograde movement was merely that, having located Rooke, he wanted to pick up his galleys and water at Malaga before bringing him to action. So soon as this was effected he had hurried back towards the Straits, and during one of Rooke's long boards to the south-east had passed inshore of him. It was a curious chance that well exemplifies the almost incalculable hazards of the sea. Both fleets were short of cruisers, and it was by their inability to scout adequately that Toulouse lost the weather gage and Rooke gained it. Again it was by the mere chance of an hour or two that Toulouse did not

elude Rooke altogether and find Hesse at his mercy in the defenceless fortress. On the other hand, had he done so, he would almost certainly have been caught by Rooke at a serious disadvantage that might well have involved the entire destruction of his fleet. As it was, Fortune had fairly divided her favour, and the superiority which Toulouse had in the size of his ships and weight of metal was almost balanced by his having lost the wind.<sup>1</sup>

It was about five and twenty miles almost due south of Cape Malaga that the French were sighted, and they at once began to form line of battle with the wind abeam and heads to the southward. Seeing them thus resolutely interposing themselves between him and Gibraltar, Rooke called in his cruisers and, having re-formed line, began to bear down to attack. But the wind was light

<sup>1</sup> The remarks of the Marquis de Villette, who commanded the French van, make it clear they did not deliberately choose the leeward station. He says they lost the weather gage through the unfortunate necessity of having to go to Velez Malaga for water after they first got contact.—*Monmerqué's Mémoires du Marquis de Villette*, 154.

As to the comparative strength of the two lines, in numbers it was 50 French to 51 of the allies, but both Shovell and Rooke said the French had 17 three-deckers to their 7. Rooke had not a single first-rate. Toulouse had two or three. The French had also over 3500 more men than the allies. Leake, however, considered the ships of the fleet pretty equally matched. He shows the allies had actually more guns than the French, and says the English 80-gun two-deckers were as heavy in metal as the French 80-gun three-deckers. Further, he says that more of the French were small. He tabulates thus:—

80 guns and upward . . . . .	French 18	Allies 16
60 " " . . . . .	" 20	" 30
Under 60 guns . . . . .	" 12	" 5
	50	51

His opinion, however, must be a little discounted because his advice was rejected and he thought the tactics of Rooke and Shovell were not as bold as they ought to have been. If the heavy calibres of the French first-rates and the large second-rates be taken into account, there can be no doubt they were markedly superior in weight of metal (S. W. Leake, *Life of Sir John Leake*). All French accounts accuse the allies of having used their bomb-vessels in the action, but this the allies deny.

and fitful and little progress could be made. It remained so all day, so that the French with the aid of their galleys were able to form their battle order without falling further to leeward. Night fell with nothing done, but with darkness the wind improved, and at daybreak on the 13th the French line was seen perfect three leagues to lee ward, and as the sun rose Toulouse hove-to to await Rooke's attack.

Then ensued an action which is now only remembered as inaugurating a period during which naval tactics sank to a hide-bound formality and rendered decisive engagements impossible—a period during which unintelligent admirals, pedantically absorbed in preserving their formation, contented themselves with fighting ship to ship and attempting no manœuvres for a concentration on part of their adversaries' line. It is doubtful however whether to dismiss the action so lightly is not to misjudge the conduct of the officers concerned and to create a misapprehension of the lines on which sailing tactics developed. It must be remembered that it was only forty years since the older group system had disappeared and the practice of fleets engaging in two single lines had been fully adopted at the battle of the Texel in 1665. About thirty years later the Jesuit Paul Hoste embalmed the ideas of his friend and patron Tourville in his famous treatise on naval evolutions. Since this work was published in 1697 no important action had been fought in the open, and it may be taken as representing the thought of the time. It shows us that the chief end of tactics, apart from gaining the wind, was to isolate and double on a part of the enemy's force. In the early days of the new system the usual method of attempting this had been to break through the hostile line by suddenly tacking upon it in succession. This method had been the favourite

one with Monk, who had used it with great boldness. Recently however it had fallen into disfavour owing to the risks it involved, and Hoste was of opinion it should never be attempted except under very special circumstances to save a critical situation, or when the faulty movements of the enemy gave a favourable opportunity by leaving a gap in his line. So long as the enemy's formation was intact, he held that doubling was never legitimate unless superior numbers enabled you to overlap him. You might then double on his van or rear. In the absence of these conditions the proper method was for the attacking fleet to bear down all together, each for its opposite in the line, and then, if by hard fighting a section of two or three ships could be forced out of the line, doubling might be attempted by passing through the gap that had been made.

It was this phase of expert opinion that underlay the much derided 'Fighting Instructions' of the British service. Ill-advised as they appear in the light of the developed system of Rodney and his successors, they nevertheless represent a definite and logical stage of progress, and history cannot afford to dismiss them with mere contempt. To a period of active and almost fanatical offence, that was perhaps largely due to the vigorous personalities of Monk and Rupert, there was succeeding a more cautious but equally well-founded period of defence. Experts had been absorbed with the idea of doubling till it had become a dangerous commonplace. By a logical reaction they were now preoccupied with methods of turning to disaster the rash or ill-judged movements which an enemy might make in endeavouring to secure an advantage by doubling. Experience had taught them that, when fleets were approximately equal, the admiral who could preserve his line the longest had the surest chance of

finding an opportunity for a crushing concentration; and thus in the naval thought of the hour the preservation of the line was becoming a higher consideration than attempts to secure a tactical advantage at the first onset.

It was with these ideas in the air that Rooke went into action. For the formation which Toulouse adopted, D'Estrées, his first captain and the real commander of the fleet, was responsible. The main strength was massed in the centre, and here the line was allowed to sag to leeward in a curve or 'bite.' The object is not certain. The English officers believed it foreboded an attempt to weather their van or rear. Possibly it was accidental, but it is certain that a previous example of the central curve occurred in Tourville's action with Torrington off Beachy Head in 1690, and it is therefore more probable it was deliberate. In order to facilitate a ready response to the movements of the English, D'Estrées formed his line with the wind abeam. This, according to Hoste, was the most vicious of all formations, since in his opinion it laid you open to be doubled in rear by an even inferior enemy with impunity. Rooke made no such attempt. To his cautious nature the new defensive tactics must have been peculiarly convincing. Moreover he must have shared Shovell's opinion that, when fleets were practically equal, a decisive victory was not to be looked for. Nor was this the main object he sought. His preoccupation was to prevent the recapture of Gibraltar, and could he inflict a severe enough blow on Toulouse to prevent his supporting the threatened siege his work was done. On the other hand, if, in seeking by hazardous tactics to secure a decisive victory, he met with a disaster such as those tactics were now generally recognised to court, he would lose not only Gibraltar but the whole command of the Mediterranean. For since he had no nearer port than

Lisbon for retreat, and could not reach even that without passing through the enemy's line, defeat would mean annihilation of his fleet. That he should fight was absolutely necessary, but under all the circumstances, political as well as naval, to avoid defeat was of more importance than to secure an overwhelming victory, and it may well be doubted whether any course could be better than that which Rooke adopted.

Although he had fifty-three of the line to the French fifty-one, and might have doubled with at least two ships, he considered it necessary to have a reserve to watch the galleys. He had therefore contented himself with equalising his line to that of Toulouse and leaving two fifty-gun ships in reserve. As he bore down, the usual trouble happened. Owing to the long time he had had to preserve his line abreast, and the fact that he had to approach the French obliquely, the van ranged ahead of the centre and the centre of the rear, and considerable gaps were left between the divisions. Seeing this, Shovell, so soon as he was within half gun-shot, hove-to to wait for Rooke, and the two opposing vice-admirals lay watching each other in silence, ship to ship. Shovell however was fourth in his line, and Villette third in his, so that the English van was overlapping the French by one ship. Here was an apparent threat to double, and Villette's leading captain passed the word down to him that the whole van must make sail to reach level with the head of the English line.<sup>1</sup> It was now Shovell's turn to fear being doubled, especially as he had in his division only

<sup>1</sup> This was certainly the meaning of Villette's movement, which was so variously interpreted by both English and French observers. Villette himself wrote the day after the action, 'On m'avait crié de main en main qu'il fallait que toute l'avant-garde forçât de voiles pour gagner le reste des ennemis.' See his despatch in Monmerqué, *Mémoires du Marquis de Villette*, 350.

fifteen sail to Villette's seventeen. He therefore seems to have made a corresponding movement ahead, with the result that he still further widened his distance from the centre. It was an advantageous moment which D'Estrées was not likely to let slip, especially as he believed, when he saw Villette making sail, he was already about to profit by it. Toulouse's superiority in the centre warranted some risk, and, if trouble came, there were always the galleys to get him out of it. Toulouse therefore signalled for his whole line to make sail with the intention of passing through the gap between Rooke and Shovell with his own division, and doubling on the British van in order to crush it before the Dutch could get into action. In the meantime, as he knew, his own rear would have ranged up to hold the British centre in check, and the Dutch would be left out of action. Rooke, though he misunderstood Toulouse's purpose, was equal to the occasion. Coming on under a press of sail, he had got within extreme gunshot when he saw the French making sail, and, believing they intended to weather him ahead of his van, he made the signal to heave-to and engage. His own two leading ships, under Rear-Admiral Dilkes, fell on Villette's rear, and thus put the two vans on an equality. He himself engaged Toulouse. The range was much too great to please him, but it was enough to stop the French movement. As the whole British line opened fire and the shot tore through his rigging, Toulouse gave up his well-designed attempt, and the action became general in centre and van, each ship pounding her opposite in the line, and the rear divisions still too distant to engage.

By his cautious tactics Rooke at the outset had deprived Toulouse of any real hope of a decisive victory. It had come down to sheer hard fighting and Rooke had

little to fear. Still he had work enough. Ship for ship Rooke's division was seriously overweighted, but stout hearts and good gunnery told, and he held his own in a manner that elicited the most enthusiastic admiration from his Dutch colleagues. In the van, Shovell was able to do better. After four hours' hard pounding, the stern of Villette's flagship blew up, and he had to bear out of the line to extinguish the fire. The rest of his division, as he says, without any reason followed his example, and with high exultation the British van saw their opponents beaten to leeward. Leake was for closing in upon them and pushing them till the French line was completely broken, so that Toulouse would be compelled to fall back with his centre to avoid the risk of being doubled. There was much to be said for his advice. Rooke by this time sadly needed relief. Not only was the superior weight of the enemy's metal telling severely upon him, but several of his division, which had formed part of the bombarding squadron at Gibraltar, had exhausted their ammunition and had to haul their wind out of the line. Seeing his opportunity, Toulouse began to work up to the gap. It was this crisis that caused Shovell to reject Leake's idea. The danger was acute, and he decided, instead of following his advantage, to draw astern and close up the broken line. It was a piece of seamanship greatly admired at the time, and although, to Leake's disgust, it left him and all the head of the British van with nothing to do, it probably saved the situation for Rooke. About the same time moreover the Dutch got into action, and for the remainder of the afternoon so pressed the French rear that towards sunset it broke to leeward like their van. To prevent isolation Toulouse himself had now to fall back with the centre, and the action came to an end as evening closed down.

Each side had suffered severely, both in men and ships, and all night the two fleets lay where they were, repairing damages. As the hours wore on, the wind began to back till at daybreak it was westerly, and the French had the weather gage. The morning broke with impenetrable haze. When it cleared away they were seen forming line of battle with heads to the northward, and Rooke at once hove-to in line to receive them with his disabled and useless ships to leeward. But it was soon seen that the French did not mean to attack. Galleys were towing shattered ships out of the line, they were still busy repairing rigging, and the British began to follow their example. So the day passed with light airs and calms, and in the evening Rooke called his council. It was agreed that, damaged and short of ammunition as they were, they could do no good by retaining the position they were occupying. Having lain to leeward of the French a whole day, challenging an attack, they had done all that honour required, and no one could say they had been beaten. There was nothing therefore to prevent their making their way to Gibraltar to protect it and complete their refit. Thither then, after distributing through the fleet what shot remained, they resolved to go, but only on the understanding that, if the French fleet were found between them and their destination, it was not to be avoided. They would reach Gibraltar through the thick of it, or not at all.

It was one of those Quixotic resolutions which no technical consideration can justify. It was thus that Sir Richard Grenville had founded the great tradition when he lost the 'Revenge' at the Azores. The same spirit was still green, and who can say that the proud resolve not to give way was not more than worth the risk it involved? Had the thing been done it would have lived as

one of the most heroic and inspiring pages in our history, but fate decreed otherwise. At daybreak it seemed the ordeal was at hand. Some four or five leagues to windward the French fleet shaped itself out of the lifting mists directly across their path. An hour or two later, a breeze came up from the eastward, and in stubborn pride the allies bore on under easy sail as though no enemy was there. Each captain had been told to fight his own way through as best he could, and when his lockers were empty to press on for the rendezvous at Gibraltar, and shift for himself. Some at least had agreed to fire their ships if they could not win through. As the allied fleet came solemnly on, the French re-formed their line to the northward, and in doing so gave ground to leeward. The wind too continued very light, and the result was that by four o'clock it was seen to be impossible to close before dark. Rooke therefore hove-to to let the crippled stragglers close up, and the desperate venture was deferred till the morrow. But when morning broke there was not a sign of the enemy to be seen. Rooke, concluding they had gone to the Straits mouth or perhaps to Cadiz to refit, at once made sail for Gibraltar. Still, not so much as a scout could be seen in the haze that prevailed, and Rooke held on blindly through the mists till he was forced to bring-to for fear of the land. So they lay all night with little wind and a great easterly sea. In the morning they heard the French had not passed the Straits. Nothing indeed had been seen of them, and the true state of affairs began to be guessed. The bold front Rooke had put on might perhaps have frightened Toulouse into returning to Toulon. Still no one could tell, and it was decided to lie where they were, covering Gibraltar, for forty-eight hours, to let the French attack if they would. The two days

passed, and then, assured that Toulouse had abandoned the enterprise, they put into Gibraltar Bay.

So ended the famous episode of Velez-Malaga. Both sides claimed the victory. Toulouse with his fleet cut to pieces had returned to Toulon, boasting that he had driven the allies out of the Mediterranean. *Te Deums* were sung in city and camp, reaching Marlborough's ears on the Danube, and damping his satisfaction with the crushing victory he had won ten days before Rooke fought. But opposite rumours reached him too as he was forming the siege of Landau. 'If the news we have here,' he wrote, 'of Sir George Rooke's having beaten the French fleet . . . be confirmed, we may hope that our affairs in those parts, as well as in Italy, will soon have a different aspect.' His hopes were certainly fulfilled. If battles are to be judged by their fruits, it was Rooke who had won. Toulouse had gone out from Barcelona to retake Gibraltar, and Rooke had successfully barred his way. Not only had he saved the fortress, but it was he who had driven Toulouse from the Mediterranean. For all the *Te Deums* that were sung France was quick to admit her failure. From the moment of Toulouse's return with his object unfulfilled, all faith in the navy was lost; no grand fleet was again attempted, and the command of the Mediterranean was abandoned to the allies.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### GIBRALTAR AND TOULON

By Rooke's stubborn fight, though the main hope of the naval campaign had not been fulfilled, the hold of the allies upon the Straits was secured. For the time at least they were one step nearer the goal, and England practically single-handed was clinging to it with an almost desperate grasp. When the battle-torn fleet anchored in the bay, the marines ashore fired a running salute round the shattered fortress, and, as evening closed in, lit up triumphant bonfires on its crumbling bastions. But for all the good face they put upon it the future was very dark, and the moment full of anxiety. The advanced troops of the Bourbon army were already crossing the neighbouring heights, the siege was about to begin, and the admirals knew the marines must face it alone. The state of the fleet made it impossible for it to remain. The condition in which the too drastic bombardment had left the fortress was almost as bad, but Hesse was as ready as ever to undertake its defence. All he asked was the marines of the fleet, sixty great guns and sixty gunners, and a detachment of carpenters and armourers to assist in the repair of the shattered works. All this, with six months' provisions, and two bomb-vessels with their tenders, the council-of-war agreed to give him. It was further resolved that all the ships that were fit for winter service should be formed into a squadron under Sir John Leake and be left on the station. The rest were to go

home with the exception of those which were too much shattered for the voyage, and these, also under Leake's command, were to stop at Lisbon to be repaired. In a week all was ready, as far as could be, for the forlorn garrison to defend itself. On August 28, to the sound of another salute, Rooke weighed, and for the first time in history the Mediterranean fleet sailed homewards, leaving a footprint behind it.

For the time it was little more. Even as Rooke sailed the Spanish army was gathered before it, and worse was to be expected. That Louis and the Spaniards would make a violent effort to recover it was a certainty. To the Government in England it was equally obvious that that attempt must not be allowed to succeed. Their precarious hold must be confirmed. True, it was not yet a British possession. It had been taken by an allied force, and the flag of Charles III. floated over it. But it was a British garrison that held it, and from the first there seems to have been little doubt as to what the ultimate fate of the fortress was to be. So small had been the assistance of the allies that its capture was practically a British exploit; for years British statesmen had made no secret of the price they expected for their share in the work of preserving the balance of power; and whether Hapsburg or Bourbon was eventually to secure the crown of Spain there was probably never much idea that England would loose her hold.

So soon as Rooke came home, Sir Charles Hedges, the Secretary of State, wrote to Marlborough for his views. The Duke replied in words that show he already regarded the place as a British possession. 'I find it generally agreed,' he wrote, 'that the post may be of vast use to our trade and navigation in the Mediterranean, and therefore that no cost ought to be spared to maintain

it. But I fear the States will not easily be brought at present to bear any share of the expense, nor do I believe the King of Portugal will be willing to spare so many of our men as may be necessary to relieve the present garrison, though I know not otherwise how it can be done, and am not in the meantime without some apprehensions for the place, since it is certain it hath been besieged for some time past, both by sea and land, and in my opinion, nothing but a superior squadron can save it.'<sup>1</sup>

It was true that Hesse and his marines had been hard pressed; but, as Marlborough wrote, the immediate danger was over. Before the end of September a French squadron of ten of the line and nine frigates with three thousand troops and a siege train appeared in Gibraltar Bay. It had been detached from Toulon under the Baron de Pointis to support the Spanish force that was investing the place, and a fortnight later the siege was opened in form. Hesse sent word to Leake begging him to come to his aid at the earliest possible moment. But Leake could not move. He had found the Lisbon dockyard bare. Spars, sails, cordage, everything was wanting. Even the two regiments which, contrary to Marlborough's expectation, the King of Portugal had ordered to Lagos at the first call for help could not be transported to the Straits. With Methuen, the indefatigable admiral strained every nerve to refit his squadron, but it was nearly a month after Hesse's first summons before he could patch it up enough to get to sea.

Fortunately, for some reason that is not known, Pointis did not remain at Gibraltar. Having landed the troops and the siege-train, he passed on to Cadiz, leaving only six frigates behind him. Hesse was thus spared an attack by sea as well as by land, and was able to use one

<sup>1</sup> *Despatches*, i. 526, November 3, 1704.

of his bomb-vessels with effect against the enemy's trenches, till one night they pluckily burnt it. On the land side he had not so much to fear. During the respite that had been allowed him he had repaired the damage of the bombardment and had much improved the defences of the north front. Still day by day the enemy's trenches grew nearer and their fire more crushing. Hesse replied by dragging guns up the heights and pouring a plunging fire into the French works, and was able to report the garrison behind the crumbling walls as full of abundant cheerfulness and himself without concern. Had he known what was threatening he could hardly have been so confident.

One dark night at the end of October, a 'forlorn' of five hundred men, led by a goatherd, landed unseen upon the far side of the Rock, and, climbing by the aid of ropes and ladders to the summit of the Middle Hill, concealed themselves till the signal should be given for action. Their lodgment was but the first step in a most formidable plan of assault. They were to be supported by a boat attack on the new mole, similar to that which had captured the fortress. It was to be in overwhelming strength, and while the garrison were absorbed in repulsing it the concealed force was to fall upon their rear. The design which had so far succeeded could hardly have failed. Everything was ready. Hundreds of boats had been collected about Algeciras; the troops were on the point of embarking; the forlorn, still undiscovered, lay in momentary expectation of the signal, when in the very hour for action Leake came swooping into the Bay. It was a complete surprise. Only one of the French squadron which had been left on guard succeeded in getting to sea, and she was quickly taken. The rest were beached and fired by their crews. The flotilla dared not

stir, and the forlorn on Middle Hill had to be left to its fate. Pinched by hunger, they soon had to come out of their hiding place. Directly they were seen, Leake reinforced the garrison, and in an hour or two the whole of the daring five hundred were dead or prisoners.

Thus for the second time Gibraltar was saved. It was to the prompt vigour of the home authorities that the success was largely due. Ten days previously, on October 19, two convoys—one Dutch and one English—had reached the Tagus with stores and transports, and in less than a week Leake had been able to get to sea with thirteen English and six Dutch of the line, besides frigates and victuallers. Thus he not only relieved the place but was able also to supply it, and by his restless activity to afford incalculable help to the garrison. With a naval brigade he undertook the whole defence of the new mole, he enfiladed the enemy's trenches with his frigates, he continually threatened their camp at Algeciras with his boats, and generally harassed the siege operations in every direction, and enheartened the dwindling garrison with the presence of his ships. Constant reports that Pointis was preparing to come out of Cadiz told him his proper place was at sea. The winter storms wasted half his ground tackle and made his position in the Bay still more dangerous. Yet, in response to the urgent entreaties of the hard pressed officers ashore, he clung to Gibraltar and his galling work. Every day his own danger and that of the garrison increased, yet it was not till he heard that a second relief force had reached the Tagus and was about to sail for Gibraltar with only a couple of frigates to escort it that he put to sea to cover the passage of the transports and storeships past Cadiz. Even then, ill-manned as he was, he left a hundred men behind him to assist the overworked marines.

By this time the garrison was again reduced to extremity. Through sickness and casualties Hesse had not a thousand men sound enough to mount guard. The safe arrival of the relieving force was a matter of life and death, and Pointis had a fresh fleet ready to stop it. Everything had to be put to the hazard, and Leake, in spite of the condition he was in, and although he knew Pointis to be in superior force, had resolved to appear before Cadiz and offer his adversary battle while the transports passed. But fate was against him. Adverse winds kept him in the Straits, nor could he get free before he heard Pointis was out and had fallen upon the convoy. Seeing a fleet off Cape Espartel flying English and Dutch colours, the transports had borne up to join it. Fortunately it fell calm, and the French, trusting too much to their false colours, began prematurely to take up an enveloping formation. The commodore of the escort immediately took alarm. It was 'Out sweeps and boats!' in a moment, and, before Pointis could close, all the transports but two were out of his clutches. Some two thousand infantry besides engineers and all kinds of stores reached the Bay in safety, and Gibraltar was again relieved. Pointis returned discomfited to Cadiz, and Leake at the end of the year went back to the Tagus to refit.<sup>1</sup>

The grip of the sea powers was closing on the gate of the Mediterranean, and Louis began to grow desperate. With the forces at his disposal he had looked upon the recapture of Gibraltar as a matter of a few weeks. When the first efforts failed, the whole situation on the Portuguese frontier had been sacrificed to form the siege. Still it not only held out but was growing stronger every day, and it was clear that if it was not taken before the

<sup>1</sup> Leake's *Life of Leake*; Sayer, *History of Gibraltar*, p. 138, note.

spring the Bourbon position in Spain could not be maintained. Louis resolved therefore to supersede the Spanish general by offering the services of his own commander-in-chief, Marshal Tessé. The result was only to make matters worse. The Spaniards were deeply hurt. In January 1705, they twice flung themselves prematurely upon the north front, determined to capture the place before Tessé arrived. Both attacks failed, owing—so the Spaniards said—to the French regiments refusing to do their duty. Meanwhile, disease and the terrors of a winter siege were sweeping off their men in hundreds. Leake at Lisbon, on the other hand, was in constant touch with the garrison. He kept throwing in fresh supplies and troops, and Pointis, idle in Cadiz, stirred no finger to prevent him.

Tessé, the moment he arrived, took in the situation at a glance. He saw that without the command of the sea the enterprise was hopeless. Assuming the character of Sancho Panza addressing his master, Don Quixote, he wrote in humorous despair to the minister Pontchartrain to tell him so. His disgust at the inactivity of Pointis he unloaded upon Condé with equal playfulness. 'The English,' he wrote, 'at any rate teach us that you may keep the sea in all weathers, for they promenade it like the swans in your river at Chantilly.'<sup>1</sup> Still his advent gave things a more formidable turn. The siege was renewed on more scientific lines, and, what was worse, Pointis, upon peremptory orders from Madrid, hardened his heart to come round to Gibraltar from Cadiz with fourteen sail. The Marshal had now what he needed, and he strenuously prepared for a grand attack by sea and land.

<sup>1</sup> Tessé to Pontchartrain, Feb. 13, 1705 (n.s.), *Lettres de Tessé*, p. 230. Same to Condé, Feb. 26, *Mémoires de Tessé*, p. 138 et seq.

This was the one thing that Hesse feared, and both Leake and Methuen grew no less anxious. Months before they had been told that Shovell was at Spithead about to sail with a squadron that would put Gibraltar beyond danger. Now it was known that he was not coming for the present. Instead, a division of his fleet was to be detached under Sir Thomas Dilkes and Sir Thomas Hardy, but even of this there was as yet no news. In the Tagus, though Leake and Methuen were stirring every nerve, things were far from ready for sea. The ambassador protested to the home Government that since he had been told to spare nothing, so that Gibraltar was kept, he had nearly ruined himself. 'The importance of Gibraltar to England,' he wrote, 'hath made me boggle at nothing.' Its importance, he ventured to add, would be as great after the peace as during the war. 'My opinion,' he urged, 'is that if the circumstances of Europe should force a peace without the monarchy of Spain being left in the possession of Charles the Third, England must never part with Gibraltar, which will always be a pledge of our commerce and privileges in Spain.'<sup>1</sup> Leake's activity elicited his warmest praises; but for all the admiral's efforts it was not till February 25 that he was ready to put to sea. The very next day he was rejoiced with the sight of Dilkes's squadron putting into the river with a convoy, which brought everything he wanted. And not only that, for Dilkes presented him with his commission as Vice-Admiral of the White and Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. A Portuguese squadron, such as it was, was also ready, and within a week he was speeding for Gibraltar under a press of sail with thirty-five of the line.

In vain the unhappy Pointis had protested against

<sup>1</sup> See his despatch of Mar. 7, 1705 (n.s.) in *Add. MSS.* 28056.

what would certainly happen if he was compelled to leave Cadiz before he was reinforced from Toulon. Neither Madrid nor Versailles would listen. Both courts were desperate, and he had to remain at Gibraltar for Tessé's combined attack. His own idea was to cruise in the Straits and stop reliefs till his force could be strengthened. Lying in the Bay, he knew he was at the mercy both of the weather and Leake. All he could do by laying a line of signal stations as far as Cadiz he did, but all was of no avail. Both the dangers he feared fell on him at once. Before the combined attack was ripe, a gale came up out of the Atlantic and drove two-thirds of his squadron from their anchors away to leeward up the Straits. He himself with his flagship, the three-decker 'Lys,' and four others of the line managed to cling on under Cape Cabrita. There he was still lying when suddenly, without a note of warning from his signal stations, the head of a fleet loomed up out of the blinding mist. It was Leake coming down on the dying gale. To the wild swans of the north it had come like a friend, and Pointis knew he was doomed. He had scarcely time to cut his cables before they were upon him. One ship immediately struck; two others were taken by boarding after a fair fight; Pointis and the fifth vessel fought their way valiantly through, but only to be driven ashore and forced to burn. The rest were chased as far as Malaga, where they had taken refuge; but at the sound of the fight they had made sail again and were soon beyond reach in Toulon. With these tidings Leake returned to Gibraltar, and as its deliverer entered the Bay a triumphant salute from the guns of the fortress proclaimed that the grip of England was set at last hard and fast upon the Straits.

It was no less a thing than that. Tessé frankly recognised that the game was lost. Whatever Madrid or

Versailles might say, it was madness to add to the frightful loss of life and resources which the attempt had cost. Before the end of the month, therefore, he raised the siege and returned to his task on the Portuguese frontier, now almost as hopeless as the other.<sup>1</sup>

Marlbrough had so far achieved his aim, and the situation for which he had been ready to sacrifice his first campaign in Flanders was in effective operation. France was faced on her furthest frontier in the Peninsula with a war nourished from the sea; and the Mediterranean, instead of being an easy means of communication that would co-ordinate her operations in Spain and Italy, had become for her an obstacle, and for her enemies a pathway she could no longer bar. At the time, the momentous revolution which had been set on foot was barely recognised—at least by public opinion. The capture of Gibraltar was rated at first far below its true value—partly no doubt because of the injudicious efforts of Rooke's friends to cry it up as a rival to Blenheim, but more perhaps because by itself it really was comparatively of small importance. As a station for the protection of commerce it was of course invaluable, and for this reason merchants highly valued it as they had valued Tangier. But strategists had long recognised that for the command of the Mediterranean a port in the Straits only capable of receiving a cruiser squadron was useless unless it was supplemented by the possession of a place that could be made into a real naval port—a place, that is, where a fleet could receive its winter refit. The prospect of destroying Toulon seemed as remote as ever, and each year it grew more evident that so long as the

<sup>1</sup> Leake's *Life* Leake; Paul Methuen's 'Account of his Voyage from Faro to Gibraltar,' March 19 to April 14, 1705 (n.s.), *Add. MSS.* 20093, f. 273 *et seq.*; Guérin, iv. 124; Duro, vi. 62.

winter squadron had to retire every autumn to Lisbon, it was impossible to make the command of the Mediterranean tell effectively upon the war. So soon as the British admiral's back was turned, the Toulon privateers and cruisers, with Minorca for a harbour of refuge, could come out and play havoc down the Carlist coast, while at the same time the French transports and storeships could pass where they were wanted without interruption, and the commerce of Marseilles could proceed with scarcely less disturbance. Under such conditions the war, both in Catalonia and Italy, might drag on interminably, and the Pope and the other Italian Princes of Bourbon sympathies could never be made to feel the danger of their irreconcilable attitude.

For those who knew, therefore, Gibraltar was but a savoury morsel to whet their appetite for more. British Mediterranean officers had long coveted Minorca. They knew it well, and in the spacious inlet of Port Mahon they recognised the finest harbour in the Mediterranean. Events were marking it still more clearly as the real key of the situation so long as Toulon remained intact. Every seaman and every soldier on the spot saw that the course of the war was turning on its possession. Louis had increased its defences and garrisoned them with a picked body of his own marines, and the old cry for its possession began to be dinned into the ears of the British Government with ever increasing importunity.

The very year after Leake had finally frustrated the attempt to regain Gibraltar the ideas of the Mediterranean men were put forth in an anonymous pamphlet, whose popularity and influence are attested by two rapid editions. It was entitled 'An Inquiry into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages.' The trouble began—so the author

asserts—immediately after the failure at Cadiz, when we ought at once to have passed on up the Straits and taken possession of Port Mahon. There, he argues, we might always have kept a fleet in the Mediterranean superior to the French, and he proceeds to set out what strategical results would have followed. By stopping the French communications with Italy, the war there could quickly have been brought to an end. The trade of Marseilles might have been ruined and our own have taken its place. Majorca, with its hardy population of mariners—most famous of privateersmen—being fervent haters of France and Castile, would have declared for Charles III. Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia, finding the French unable to protect their trade, would soon have followed suit. Not only should we have dominated the Barbary states, but we could easily and naturally have ousted France from the leading position at the Porte. Other omissions he mentions—such as neglecting vigorous enough action against the French and Spanish colonies; but before and above all he places this shortsighted failure to seize an adequate naval station in the Mediterranean. ‘I shall only add,’ he concludes, ‘that had we, according to the maxims of all wise invaders, first secured ourselves of a port and place of arms upon the skirts of their dominion, as we might easily have done by seizing Port Mahon, we should have prevented the fatal mismanagement of the war in Italy and Spain, where sometimes the French and sometimes the allies have all the advantage of one another by a sudden run, as happens in a game of football; and had we kept that port after the war was over, which could not well be denied us, we might have made it a magazine and station for ships to command the Mediterranean and protect our Straits trade, and should thereby have been in a condition by a naval power

(without incurring any danger from standing armies) to hold the balance of Europe in our hands, which, as it is our natural province, is England's greatest security and glory.’<sup>1</sup>

Here for the first time we have an explicit public declaration of England's true position in Europe, and of the simple policy that was necessary to secure it. It is no wonder that such sentiments rapidly carried conviction and solidified into a settled purpose. But, clearly as the expedient was indicated, it was long before circumstances permitted its achievement. One reason for this was undoubtedly that it did not commend itself to Marlborough's drastic notions of warfare. Secondary or masking operations never found favour with him so long as there was any possibility of a blow direct at the heart of things. He was still clinging to his original plan. No sooner was Gibraltar secure than he was for completing what he had carried so far by flinging the whole weight of the British navy upon Toulon. This was his idea for the naval campaign of 1705, but the sailors pronounced the operation impracticable, and with his usual deference to expert knowledge he gave way.<sup>2</sup> But it was only to bide his time, nor did he abandon his fundamental objective and adopt Minorca as the nearest equivalent until he had actually tried Toulon and failed. Had the Emperor and Savoy been able to rise to his height of thought and been ready to support the cardinal operation with all their force, there is little doubt, seeing the condition Toulon was in, that success would have been won. But they were each too intent on securing the

<sup>1</sup> *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. xi. pp. 5-28, 2nd edition, 1707.

<sup>2</sup> See Tessé's ‘Memorandum of the projects of the enemy,’ April 15, 1705 (*Mémoires*, ii. 169). He had apparently received from Versailles a complete report of what passed at the Supreme Council of War held before the Queen early in 1705.

fruits of victory to combine in an adequate effort or to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve it. So, instead of dealing a blow that, if successful, must have brought France to her knees, the energy of the maritime powers was frittered away in a premature effort to place the Hapsburg King on the Spanish throne.

So the war took a new turn, which kept England from confirming her hold upon the Mediterranean. In the first week in August, 1705, the Earl of Peterborough, to whom was committed the new plan of operations, and Shovell with their long-delayed fleet put into Gibraltar, 'the ruins of which place,' says a contemporary chronicler, 'were a plain demonstration of the great courage, industry, and indefatigable care wherewith the Prince of Darmstadt had defended it against the united force of France and Castile.' In the British flagship was Charles III., bound for Catalonia, to begin from there the conquest of his kingdom. For awhile it is true the astounding boldness of Peterborough's operations met with a success that seemed to justify the enterprise. Barcelona fell miraculously in September, and Shovell went home, leaving Charles king in Catalonia. Leake remained behind with the usual winter squadron, but as there was as yet no British port within the Straits, it had still to be based on Lisbon, and little had really been done to improve the situation in the Mediterranean.

It was there, in spite of the rejection of his design on Toulon, that Marlborough's eyes were more earnestly fixed than ever. It was there he saw more clearly each campaign the vital point of the war lay, and he knew that if for the moment the allies had the best of it in Catalonia, in Italy things were as bad as they could be. Savoy was almost in despair, and Marlborough was doing all he knew to strengthen the cause in the two seats of the

Mediterranean struggle. Heinsius, the Grand Pensionary of the States, who alone of Dutch statesmen could see to Marlborough's horizon, entirely shared his view of their importance. 'I am sure,' he wrote to Marlborough, 'that on these two points will turn the good or evil fortune of the common cause.'<sup>1</sup> The French were equally alive to the situation, and it was known that a strenuous effort from Toulon was to be made to recover Barcelona before the allies could resume command of the adjacent seas. Orders were sent down to Leake at Lisbon to do his utmost to prevent it, and Byng was hurried to sea with a squadron to reinforce him. Leake at once moved down to Gibraltar, but there he heard that Toulouse was before Barcelona with a fleet he could not hope to face. Tessé moreover had suddenly invested the place by land in overwhelming force. Peterborough was shut out and powerless, and it was clear that it would be touch and go whether the reinforcements arrived from England in time to save the Carlists' capital.

At home, having done all in his power for Catalonia, Marlborough was deep in a remarkable scheme for the salvation of Savoy and Northern Italy. It was nothing less than a design to transfer thither from the Netherlands army twenty thousand men and himself to take the command. Apart from his growing conviction that the struggle could only be definitely decided in the ancient centre of dominion, the exasperating way in which his late campaigns had been spoiled and even ruined by the perversity of the Dutch Government and the German generals made him long to be alone with Eugene. For to Eugene was to be committed this year the command of the Imperial army in North Italy, and together once

<sup>1</sup> Heinsius to Marlborough, January 18 to 29, 1706, Vreede, *Correspondance Diplomatique et Militaire* &c. p. 1.

more the Duke knew they could carry all before them. With Lombardy and Piedmont in his hands and the main fleet on the coast of Provence, he saw his way to a dash into France which would give him Toulon, set the Cevennes once more in a blaze, and cut Louis off from the Mediterranean and all that it meant to the French power. Bold and heroic as his proposal was, he had almost succeeded in persuading the States to consent, when the Margrave of Baden, not having received the reinforcements he expected, fell back behind the Rhine and exposed the left flank of the Netherlands' position. The Dutch at once took alarm. Ten thousand men were all they would consent to detach for Italy, and that only on condition that Marlborough remained to command in Flanders. Without abandoning his idea, as we shall see, Marlborough again bowed his head to the disappointment, and, after his wont, set himself to make the best of things as they stood. His reward was the immortal campaign of Ramilies, which gave him the whole of Flanders from the Meuse to the sea.

Meanwhile Barcelona was reduced to the direst extremity. The castle of Montjuich had fallen, and Peterborough and Leake were at Valencia, not daring to proceed further with their inadequate fleet. It was not till April that they saw Byng's welcome sails. By that time Tessé had actually made his lodgment on the counter-scarp of the city, and was preparing for the final assault. There was not a moment to lose, and no sooner had Byng joined than a general chase was ordered. With every rag they could carry, the captains raced for Barcelona without order or thought of the consequences, so long as the leading ships could fasten their teeth in the French fleet and prevent its escape. It was a well-judged risk. Byng, having the cleanest ships, was the first to arrive,

and it was to see Toulouse's rearguard hull-down towards Toulon. The allied admirals had missed their fight, but Barcelona was saved. At the first whisper of their approach, Toulouse, repeating Tourville's move, had fled and left Tessé to his fate. For two days the gallant marshal strove to snatch victory from defeat. But on the third he was compelled to raise the siege precipitately, leaving all his siege train, stores, and wounded behind. The success was complete, and on May 10, two days before Ramilies was fought, King Charles was able to write to Marlborough an effusive letter of thanks for the new and convincing proofs of zeal and concern for his service that he had so successfully displayed.

The immediate result of this operation was that the allies were able to advance from the Portuguese frontier to Madrid and proclaim Charles in the Castilian capital. On the Mediterranean side Cartagena surrendered, Alicante was taken by storm, Ivica and Majorca tendered their allegiance to Leake. Minorca was ready to do the same, and Charles had particularly urged its reduction upon the admiral. Peterborough had supported the King's proposal, but Leake replied that the French garrison in Port Mahon was too strong for his marines to master without the assistance of a military force. To meet the objection Peterborough was for joining him with the necessary troops, but, before he could act, orders arrived, so he said, that he was to go to Italy to enhearten the Duke of Savoy and consult with him and Eugene for the next year's campaign. The enterprise consequently had to be postponed till his return. By that time it was too late. With the approach of winter Leake had to leave the Mediterranean, and the finest port within the Straits had to be left in the hands of the French.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The papers relating to this incident are printed in Leake's *Life of Leake*, pp. 214, 259, 265. A letter from Wassenaar, the Dutch admiral, to

Though every one recognised the strategical importance of the place, the French sea power seemed too much broken for it to cause much anxiety. Moreover there was larger game on foot. As the first fruits of his resounding victory, Marlborough at last saw his way to realising the great idea towards which he had never ceased to work. Three days before Ramilies he had written to disclose it to the Emperor and to explain why he had been compelled to abandon it temporarily. 'I still keep my views,' he added, 'in that quarter, knowing how important it is to you and the allies to keep the upper hand in Italy. We shall have twenty-eight thousand men in the pay of England and the States, and I shall try to increase them and go myself at the end of the campaign so as to be early afield there next campaign.'<sup>1</sup>

No sooner was Ramilies fought than he was busy smoothing the way. Early in the year a French refugee, the Comte de Guiscard, had proposed a descent upon Rochefort and the Charente with the object of penetrating to the Cevennes. Nothing could better prepare the ground for Marlborough's great stroke, and to this object the main fleet under Shovell was devoted. The landing force was to be composed mainly of French refugees; but so soon as Marlborough saw his position secure in Flanders he detached some of his own regiments to stiffen it. As the fleet was not ready for Shovell to hoist his flag till the middle of July, there was small chance of its doing anything effective. Every similar expedition in modern times had failed, and we may well believe that Marlborough expected but little directly. In any case it would serve as a diversion for both Italy and Catalonia,

Leake on the subject is misplaced among the *Leake Papers* of 1708, *Add. MSS.* 5443, f. 82.

<sup>1</sup> *Despatches*, ii. 494, May 9. Cf. his letter to same effect to Sinzendorf, *ibid.* p. 497.

and perhaps he foresaw how the move would play into his hands. This it certainly did. Owing to the Dutch contingent being behind time, Shovell missed the last of the summer weather, and was kept windbound in Torbay till the first week in September. By that time it was obviously too late for a campaign in Guienne, and Marlborough astutely proposed that Shovell should carry on and strengthen the cause in the Peninsula. The States could find no reason for refusing, and Marlborough was a long stride nearer his purpose.

At the same hour came news of still higher moment for the great end. In Italy Eugene had crowned his reputation with his most brilliant and successful campaign. All the summer Turin had been besieged, and it seemed that nothing could save it. But Eugene had achieved the almost hopeless task. By manoeuvres of extraordinary brilliance he had driven in the covering army, and as Shovell lay windbound in Torbay he had relieved the beleaguered city. A fortnight later Charles III. was proclaimed in Milan, but Eugene did not rest. His victory was followed by a series of rapid and effective movements, which before winter set in drove the French clean out of Northern Italy, and left the way open for an invasion of France from the south-east as completely as Marlborough's campaign had exposed it on the north.

Unfortunately, on the Catalonian side, things were not so well. Even before Peterborough had left on his real or assumed mission to Savoy, the tide had begun to turn. Charles and his generals were learning that to defeat Spanish armies was not to conquer Spain, and that to proclaim a king in her capital was not to detach her people from the crown of their choice. The nation rose in guerilla bands, Madrid had to be abandoned, and when Leake was forced to retire to Lisbon at the approach of

winter, the French were able to take full advantage of the situation. Shovell did not reach the Tagus till January 1707, but he at once hurried on and landed some seven thousand men for Peterborough. It was all the fleet could do, for a higher call compelled his immediate return to Lisbon.

By this time Marlborough's long-deferred plan was ripe, and the hour of Toulon had come. The great Mediterranean arsenal was to be the main objective of the coming campaign. Savoy and Eugene with the subsidised troops and an Imperialist army were to attack it by land. Shovell with the main fleet was to support them by sea, and Marlborough, although he had been forced to give up the idea of conducting the attempt himself, was preparing to back it up by a simultaneous invasion from the north. Shovell therefore was under orders to return to his base at Lisbon and prepare the fleet for its share in the work. In his absence Galway, who was now commander-in-chief in Spain, made a desperate attempt to recover Madrid, but it only ended in the fatal day of Almanza, and the Hapsburg King was once more confined to his Catalonian dominion. Such warfare could indeed only be compared to the sudden runs of a game of football, and could lead to no definite result. It was feared that the crushing victory of the French would allow Louis to detach troops from Spain to the defence of Provence, and it was clear everything depended on success, sudden and swift, at Toulon. Shovell returned to the Carlist coast in time to pick up the fugitives from the fatal battle, and then passed on up the Straits to join hands with Savoy.

Had Marlborough been permitted to make his invasion, had the Emperor been loyal, or had Eugene even been left a free hand, there is little doubt that the *coup de*

*grâce* would have been given. But the stars in their courses fought against the great design. The Dutch would not consent to Marlborough's invasion from the north, and the Emperor refused to co-operate adequately with Savoy. The straits to which France had been reduced in the last campaign had caused Louis to make tentative efforts at peace, and the Emperor, mindful of the partition treaties, was obstinately determined to get Naples into his hands before negotiations could begin. To this end, regardless of the common cause for which he had done so little, he secured by a convention with Louis the neutrality of Northern Italy, which left him free to detach a force to the south. In vain the British Government protested they could take Naples for him at any moment when Toulon was once destroyed. The Emperor would not listen. It was even believed in England that he and others were by no means eager to see Marlborough's plan succeed, since the destruction of Toulon would leave the English and Dutch in complete command of the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> The end of it was that Eugene eventually joined the army of invasion with little beyond his sword.

Even so he might have succeeded had he not been hampered with the Duke of Savoy for a colleague. Tessé, who was in command of the French army of the south, had an interminable line of frontier to protect with a wholly inadequate force. He could not tell where Eugene meant to strike. By a well-conceived feint he was made to believe that it was Franche-Comté that was threatened, and it was not till the enemy were almost crossing the frontier that he recognised what the real objective was. So well had Eugene masked his aim, and so rapid was his

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Cunningham, *Hist. of Great Britain from the Revolution to the Accession of George I.*, ii. 103.

advance with the co-operation of the fleet, that but for his colleague's hesitation he would certainly have reached Toulon, which on the land side was practically undefended, before Tessé could have gathered a garrison strong enough to resist even his diminished force. As it was, it was a neck and neck race. So great was the danger that the whole Toulon squadron to the number of over fifty of the line were sunk to prevent their being burnt. Only two were kept as floating batteries. But the last precious hours were wasted by Savoy's stubbornness when Eugene was actually within striking distance. Tessé was able to complete an entrenched camp and to collect a garrison for it that made surprise impossible. Without the force that had been detached to Naples a siege was hopeless. For some time, with no small skill and courage, both fleet and army clung to the attempt, but a retreat soon became inevitable.

Thus one of the best planned and most necessary operations of the war came to a fruitless issue. The situation in the Mediterranean was still incomplete, and it became clearer than ever that, until the French power of disturbance was removed by some more feasible means, the 'game of football' would never end.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### MINORCA

TOULON remained a thorn in the side of the allies. In spite of the destruction that had been caused by Shovell's bombardment and by the drastic measures that had been taken for the defence, its secondary possibilities remained untouched. Marlborough's great design, which ought to have lived as a worthy pendant to the immortal campaign of Blenheim, had failed, and he and every one saw that they must now fall back upon the minor expedient of masking the fortress, they could not destroy, with a naval force permanently on the spot.

Acutely conscious of the main source of their difficulties, the English generals in Spain, in conjunction with the Court of Barcelona, began urging the English Government to keep a strong squadron all the winter within the Straits. Marlborough, convinced that it was now the only possible cure, was backing the proposal, and had given Charles's agents to understand that the Queen would certainly consent, if a suitable port were provided for a base. This was the old difficulty. Spezzia was offered, but Marlborough assured the powers concerned that it was no good, for the British admirals considered it unfit to provide for the accommodation and requirements of ships of the line. Again he showed he was no man to force naval officers into action to which they objected on technical grounds, and the danger of overriding their opinions had just been emphasised in a way that could not be disguised.

In returning home as usual in the late autumn, Shovell had encountered the catastrophe which he and his school had always foreboded. The difficulties of the navigation caused him to miss the entrance of the Channel, and the fleet fell among the Scilly rocks. Though most of them escaped, his own flagship was cast away, and he himself was found gasping on the shore of a lonely cove by a wrecker and murdered for his rings. The loss of so fine and renowned an old seaman could not but make a profound impression. His place for the ensuing campaign was to be filled by Sir John Leake, and though Marlborough keenly desired that he should have authority to leave a winter squadron in the Mediterranean when his campaign was over, he would not hear of so unprecedented a measure being forced upon him against his better judgment.

It is thoroughly characteristic of the greatest soldier and war minister that England has ever produced, that he fully understood where his own judgment ended, and where he must bow to more expert knowledge. 'I am making my utmost endeavour,' he wrote to King Charles at the end of June 1708, 'to get the Queen to allow a squadron to winter in the Mediterranean, although I perceive the naval officers are of a contrary opinion, and that they do not think that ships of war will be entirely safe in the port of Spezzia, where they even fear lack of provisions and other stores necessary to put the ships from time to time in a condition for sea.' On such a point as this the seamen's word was law to him, and he took care, for all his fair words to the King, that the navy men should not be forced from their legitimate position by the insistence of the Carlist Court. A week or two later he received the official memorandum of the Admiralty on the practicability of the new proposal, and

sent it on to General Stanhope, who had succeeded Galway as British commander-in-chief in Catalonia. 'I send it,' he wrote, 'only for your information, that you may by your insinuations prevent the Court's putting too great a stress upon it, in case it should be found impracticable, for it is certain our sea officers are the best judges of what may be done with safety in this case.' Then in a post-script he adds with his own hand, 'I am so entirely convinced that nothing can be done effectually without the fleet that I conjure you if possible to take Port Mahon and to let me have your reasons for any other port that I may continue to press them in England.'

At the same time he wrote to Count Wratislaw, the Emperor's minister, 'There is no one but admits the necessity of having a winter squadron in the Mediterranean; but when all is said and done we must submit to the judgment of the admirals and sea officers on the safety of the port and other accommodation for ships of the line. It is certain they are the best judges, and Sir John Leake has order for it; but I must tell you plainly that, so far as I can learn, these gentlemen do not believe any port safe and fit except that of Mahon. I have written to Mr. Stanhope to do his utmost to make himself master of it, after which there will be no difficulty. And pray permit me to tell you once more that all you can write on this subject and all the orders that can be given in England must be entirely subservient to the judgment of the fleet. That is quite simple to understand.' To Count Sinzendorf, another Imperial minister, he sent the same information and the same caution. 'The sea service,' he said, 'is not so easily managed as that of land. There are many more precautions to take, and you and I are not capable of judging them.' Still of the paramount strategical necessity no one was a better judge than himself, and on the sailors' conditions he

continued to press on the enterprise. Early in September he assured the Marquis de Prie, the Imperial envoy to the Pope, that he had long been convinced of the necessity of the squadron, and that the only difficulty was the admirals' insisting on a proper port being provided for it. 'But,' he added, 'I have made representations so strong that I flatter myself we shall attain our object.'<sup>1</sup>

His confidence was not unfounded. Stanhope was already in motion. Just as the campaign in Catalonia was coming to an end he had received Marlborough's urgent exhortation as well as orders direct from the Government to the same effect, and, seeing the enterprise on which his heart had long been set within his reach, he hurried from the camp at Cervera with every man that could be spared from the narrowed Carlist frontier, and in four days was at Barcelona busy with transports.

From the fleet he had fair hope of assistance; but this can only have arisen from a knowledge that Leake for some time past had been anxious to see Port Mahon at the disposal of the fleet. The admiral, in spite of what Marlborough wrote, had certainly no 'order for it' in his official instructions. They contained nothing special beyond general directions to do his best for the naval and military situation in the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> On entering the Straits therefore he had as usual busied himself with supporting the 'game of football' in Catalonia by transporting troops and stores, and cutting up the French coastwise communications. While thus engaged he had received more definite orders from home. The Pope, he was told, had been supplying funds for an invasion of the Queen's dominions by 'the pretended Prince of Wales,' and had even been offering prayers publicly for his success.

<sup>1</sup> *Marlborough Despatches*, iii. 45, 471; iv. 81-2, 118-9, 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Leake's Life of Leake*, p. 297.

It was an insult the Queen could not pass over, and he was therefore to take the first opportunity of making a demonstration before Civita Vecchia and demanding the immediate payment of four hundred thousand crowns on pain of the last rigours of military execution in the Papal territory. The orders were accompanied by a covering letter from Sunderland explaining that he was really to carry them out, if it could be done without prejudice to the main object of the campaign, by which was meant the support of the Court of Barcelona.<sup>1</sup> At the same time Charles, whose Court and army were feeling acutely the pinch of his straitened frontier, begged him to undertake the reduction of Sardinia with its inexhaustible granary and its invaluable port of Cagliari. By the tenor of Leake's instructions he had no doubt that Charles's request should take precedence of the demonstration at Civita Vecchia, and especially as the Dutch admiral had insisted on referring the matter home before he would consent to join it. To Sardinia therefore the fleet proceeded. After a short bombardment Cagliari capitulated, and Leake was able to inform Charles and his generals that the resources of the island and all the war material he had captured were at their disposal.

Leake's welcome report had just reached Catalonia when Stanhope received his directions about Minorca. With his own orders had come a sealed packet for Leake, which he did not doubt contained instructions for the co-operation of the fleet, and as it was now at liberty Stanhope felt he could count on its support. Still Leake's movements were uncertain. Charles had written begging him, so soon as Sardinia was reduced, to fetch from Naples, which was now in his possession, four thousand

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Leake*, p. 334; *Leake Papers*, iv. 28, in *Add. MSS.* 5443. The order was dated May 4.

troops of those which had been so unhappily detached from Eugene's Toulon expedition. For the moment therefore, when every hour was precious, Stanhope was in no little difficulty. It is true, at the King's request, Leake had left half a dozen ships behind at Barcelona for its protection, but over these neither Stanhope nor Charles had further authority. There were sufficient transports, however, and Stanhope embarked in them what troops and guns he had secured. At the same time he sent word to Majorca, ordering more guns and troops to be ready to meet him, and with the King's congratulations to Leake and the sealed packet from home went a letter from Stanhope saying that he assumed the secret despatch related to Minorca and that he intended to make a lodgment there, and await the arrival of his fleet.<sup>1</sup> Whether the captains at Barcelona would take the risk of assisting him or not, he meant to go. One of them fortunately was his brother, and he and another resolved to stand by him. Seeing him so determined, the others could not long resist the temptation, and the last week in August the expedition sailed.

Meanwhile Leake had moved out of Cagliari Bay to Pola to water his fleet and be ready for action. His position was one of considerable difficulty. The Dutch admiral had received orders forbidding him to assist in coercing the Pope, the troops at Naples were not ready to embark, and he had therefore sent to Barcelona for further orders. It was already the middle of August, fully late for any new operation, and, as no orders came, Leake made up his mind to deal with the Pope at once and alone. A council of war was already assembling to formally confirm his resolve. Everything was ready for sailing. His ultimatum to the Pope was actually drafted,

<sup>1</sup> Stanhope to Leake, Barcelona, August 13-24, 1708, Mahon, *War of Succession*, App. p. lxxi.

when a felucca came in to the fleet with Stanhope's summons and the sealed packet for the admiral. So far from bidding him support the attempt on Minorca, it contained a still more urgent order to punish the Pope if he could do so without prejudice to the main scheme. It was an extremely delicate situation, and so soon as Leake had read the papers he laid the whole of them before his council. Among others was an extract from Sunderland's letter to Stanhope, in which he informed the general of Charles's prayers for a winter squadron being kept within the Straits. 'Every one is ready to agree,' wrote the minister, 'that nothing could be of greater use, but the great question is: How shall such a squadron be secure in any port of Italy from insults of the French by a superior force from Toulon? . . . I conclude upon this head, unless we can take Toulon from the French or Port Mahon, this thing is in no way practicable with safety.' As there was no hope of Savoy's helping with Toulon he concluded: 'It remains that you should dispose yourselves to be masters of Port Mahon.'<sup>1</sup>

This and the general directions about the main scheme were all the authority there was for supporting Stanhope. Still, as the general frankly wrote, it was quite impossible to reduce Minorca without Leake's assistance, since his force, though strong enough to effect a lodgment, was too weak to reduce Port Mahon. Under the circumstances it is a high testimony to the sailor's grasp of the vital essentials of the situation that there appears to have been no hesitation as to what ought to be done. Naval strategists, as we have seen, knew well enough that no Prince in Italy could resist the pressure of a winter squadron acting from a base within the Straits, and it was unanimously decided as the matter of the first importance to proceed at once

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Leake*, June 22, 1708.

to Minorca and to leave the Pope and the troops at Naples till Port Mahon was secured. It was a high and lucid resolution not only to the great credit of the officers concerned, but worthy of remembrance as a lasting example of sagacious naval judgment for all time.<sup>1</sup>

Leake's action was as prompt as his resolution. As he had been on the point of sailing, there was no need for a moment's delay. So the Holy Father, as the admiral called him in his undelivered ultimatum, had respite from the British guns, and so rapid was the admiral's movement on his new quest that he was before Port Mahon on August 25. Stanhope was not there. Leake therefore sent two third-rates on to Majorca to pick up the troops and stores which Stanhope had told him were to be ready. They returned with their charge on September 1, and two days later Stanhope appeared with the main body of the force.

He found everything prepared for him. Leake had already marked and surveyed a landing place, and had ascertained the exact strength of the garrison. It consisted of a thousand men, half of whom were picked French marines, but the rest an old Minorca regiment that could be counted on to do no mischief. But Leake was still in a difficulty. The season was far advanced, and, though he had authority to leave a winter squadron behind him, he himself was under orders to go home early enough to avoid a repetition of Shovell's disaster. It was therefore high time that he was on the

<sup>1</sup> These details are important in view of the fact that nearly all general histories from Boyer's *Queen Anne* downwards practically ignore Leake's and the fleet's share in the exploit. Lord Mahon's account, which does not mention the fleet at all, as though Leake had not been present, is particularly disingenuous. General Stanhope's part was quite brilliant enough without disguising his dependence on Leake for his success (*War of Succession in Spain*, 255-6). In the *Life of Leake* the case for the fleet against Boyer is set out with all the documents on which it securely rests. Burchett fully supports it.

wing. Still he knew too well the high value of the enterprise in hand to spoil it if it could possibly be helped. He therefore decided to place at Stanhope's disposal a strong squadron under Sir Edward Whitaker, the officer to whom Rooke had committed the main boat attack at the capture of Gibraltar.<sup>1</sup> And not only this, for he also took the responsibility of leaving behind him a large number of the marines of his own ships and all the bread and ammunition he could safely spare. In this way Stanhope could muster two thousand six hundred men, of whom not quite half were British, and with these a landing was at once effected at the point Leake had prepared about two miles from Port Mahon. The undefended town was immediately occupied, and, having thus seen everything in a fair way to success, Leake took his leave and went home.

So difficult was the country between the landing place and the castle of St. Philip which defended the entrance of the Mahon inlet, that it was nearly a fortnight before Stanhope could cover the ground with his siege train. Whitaker employed the delay by sending two ships of the line round to seize Port Fornells on the north side of the island, in order to provide a safe retreat for the transports. The little fort was quickly reduced, and the transports were able to lie snug in a harbour almost as good as Mahon. At the same time a few hundred troops and two other vessels were detached against Ciudadela, the capital of the island. It surrendered upon summons, and thus, when Stanhope appeared before St. Philip, its defenders were already half beaten with bad news. Still it presented no easy task. The works had been recently much enlarged and strengthened, and were well armed. It was on

<sup>1</sup> Whitaker's squadron was 18 of the line and frigates, 1 fire-ship, 2 bomb-vessels, and 2 hospital ships, besides 3 Dutch ships.

September 17 that Stanhope's guns were able to open on the outer lines, and they quickly made an impression. In a few hours some breaches were opened, one of them opposite to where was posted a brigade under Brigadier George Wade, Stanhope's second in command and afterwards famous as the great Scottish road-maker. It had been Stanhope's intention to assault the next day, but as soon as the fire ceased Wade's grenadiers without orders rushed their breach. Seeing what was happening, Stanhope moved on in support, with the result that the disheartened enemy abandoned the whole outer *enceinte* in a panic, and before night Wade was securely established on the glacis of the castle. They did not wait for more. A capitulation followed on the morrow, and Minorca, so long desired and so long feared, was thus almost miraculously in Stanhope's hands. The Carlist sympathies of the native portion of the garrison had no doubt as much to do with the success of the enterprise as the bold rapidity of Leake's and Stanhope's movements; but it was none the less a brilliant operation that should rank at least as high as the capture of Gibraltar.

From the first it was at least as highly appreciated. Marlborough, so soon as he heard of it, congratulated his importunate correspondents all round that the question of a winter squadron was now settled, and that the Pope and the Italian Princes would have to lower their tone. And this is what actually happened. True, the winter Mediterranean squadron did not yet exist. Before Leake left, Charles had begged him to order Whitaker to winter at Mahon. But, still sticking to his first position, Leake had refused on the ground that it was impossible till Mahon was properly furnished as a dockyard with all necessary naval or ordnance stores and conveniences for

careening. With this Charles had to be content, but it was enough. Without troubling Whitaker to call, the Pope abandoned the French cause by solemnly recognising the Hapsburg claimant as King of Spain. To clinch matters, as soon as Stanhope's success was known at home, Sir George Byng received orders to take a squadron there with all the necessary stores, and winter in the Mediterranean. Thus not a moment was lost in reaping the full advantage of what had been gained with all the good effects that had been anticipated.

But it was not only from the point of view of the war that the conquest was regarded. Before Stanhope was well established at Mahon he had made up his mind that his prize must never go out of British hands. In announcing his success to the Queen's Government he gave it as his humble opinion that England ought never to part with the island, since it would give the law to the Mediterranean both in peace and war. To this end he took immediate steps by astutely returning to Barcelona, in evidence of his zeal for King Charles's cause, the whole of his Spanish and Portuguese troops which he had borrowed, and retaining only his own British. The Court of Barcelona at once took alarm. It was one of the many times when France, stunned by the blows she had received, was making desperate overtures for peace, even to offering Marlborough four million livres to secure it on terms that would not completely paralyse her in the Mediterranean. That Minorca was in British hands was therefore no little cause of anxiety to the Hapsburg interest. 'Whether we have war or peace,' wrote Stanhope again in sending home Wade with despatches, 'I cannot but hope we shall think of preserving Port Mahon, and indeed the whole island. Brigadier Wade will acquaint your lordship that I have had some difficulties here about the government of it which

are not yet over. Therefore I believe that it will be convenient that a commission were sent to Colonel Petit to be Lieutenant-Governor of it, and instructions never to admit any troops but English into the castle and forts.' Later he suggested that the confirmation of his arrangements should be made a condition of giving the Portuguese and Carlists the further assistance they were asking, and he never ceased to urge the strategical importance of his conquest. 'Of what consequence it is,' he wrote, 'with respect to France, Spain, Italy, and Africa, is not to be expressed,' and above all he valued it in view of a recurrence of war with the Dutch. Indeed it was the jealousy of the Dutch that was the main difficulty of its being settled as part of the British reward. Marlborough, with his wide diplomatic experience, was particularly anxious. 'It is a very ticklish point,' he wrote to Stanhope, 'and will need your greatest prudence in the management of it; for as soon as it is known, besides the improvement which the French Court and those at Madrid will endeavour to make of it to the disadvantage of King Charles, I expect to hear loudly of it from Holland for the very reasons you mention.'

Eventually Stanhope was clever enough to get his way, and England was to all intents in practical possession of all that William had thought necessary to guarantee her against the danger of a French prince on the throne of Spain. Still the peace overtures failed and the war dragged on. As blow after blow staggered Louis on his throne, and the cry of his wounded people grew beyond bearing, he again and again made almost abject bids for peace. But the allies would not listen. Every year Dutch, Hapsburg, and Carlist grew more grasping and more feeble. Every year they departed more widely from their engagements to the alliance, and more entirely left

the weight of the war upon England's shoulders. That at last she grew weary both of her own war party and her obstinate allies is no matter for wonder and little for censure. Holland, from sheer exhaustion, had practically ceased to be a naval power. The war at sea had become almost entirely a British war. So far as England was concerned the victory had long been won, and when at last Louis appealed to her directly she resolved to force the allies to strike a balance.

The Congress of Utrecht was the result. Of all the terms, upon which France won the intercession of England, there were none that caused more bitter heart-burning or were more obstinately clung to than those which confirmed her in the possession of Port Mahon and Gibraltar. Above all were the Dutch disturbed. It was impossible to disguise from themselves that their century of naval and commercial rivalry with England was ending in her becoming beyond question or reach the one sea power. By securing the domination of the Mediterranean that position would be established past hope. Already in 1711, when Louis was trying to deal with the Dutch as he was now dealing with England, the Grand Pensionary had said that he was willing to treat mainly out of suspicion of what England was trying to get for herself within the Straits.<sup>1</sup>

So soon therefore as it was known that Louis had accepted the Queen's preliminaries the Dutch became stubbornly hostile. For the Queen's conditions included not only Gibraltar and Port Mahon but the concession of the whole Spanish slave trade, the 'Asiento' as it was technically called, and large commercial privileges in the Spanish colonies. It meant the complete supremacy of England, both as a naval and a com-

<sup>1</sup> Swift, *Last Years of Queen Anne*.

mercial power, and they strained every artifice in concert with the war party in England to wreck the negotiations. On one condition alone were they willing to withdraw their opposition, and that was that they should garrison Gibraltar and Port Mahon jointly with England and share with her the commercial rights she was to obtain.<sup>1</sup> The English would not listen for a moment. The House of Commons bluntly declared that ever since the year 1706 the Dutch had taken no part in maintaining or acquiring the positions which had been won in the Straits. From that time they had abandoned the war in the Peninsula, contrary to all their engagements, and had forfeited all claim to share its proceeds. Fortified with the support of the House of Commons the Queen's peace Government became more firm than ever. The British plenipotentiaries were instructed, if the Dutch persisted in the attitude they were taking, to make a separate treaty with France. 'For the Queen'—so their instructions ran—'was determined never to allow the States any share in the Asiento, Gibraltar or Port Mahon; nor could she think it reasonable that they should be upon an equal foot with her in the trade with Spain, to the conquest whereof they had contributed so little.'

The Empire was almost as hostile as the Dutch and sullenly supported their protests. A deadlock was reached, and Harley himself was sent over to break it. On the main point there was not to be an inch of concession. His instructions were 'that no extremity should make her Majesty depart from insisting to have the Asiento for her own subjects and to keep Gibraltar and Port Mahon.'<sup>2</sup> From this attitude her Government never

<sup>1</sup> Bolingbroke, *Letters on the State of Europe*, No. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Swift, *Last Years of Queen Anne*.

flinched. The panacea which William III. had been the first to make definitely an object of British policy was by this time thoroughly understood, and the plenipotentiaries came out at last from the Congress bearing in their hands that priceless treasure which has determined the position of England in Europe from that day to this.

So in all the pomp of a European concert the seal was set on the work which Ward, the pirate, had disreputably begun. Timorously James I. had sown the seed without knowledge of its nature, and scarcely aware that he had let it fall. Cromwell, by an instinct almost as blind, had tilled the pregnant soil, and Charles II., by a more conscious move, had brought the fruit to his lips. But all these efforts have more the colour of some unreasoned intuition for dominion, some impulse of a quickening destiny than of a real apprehension of the sources of European power. It was not till William III. brought with him for British statesmen a real feeling for continental politics, that the truth took visible shape. Once established in his island realm he was quick to see how the ships could be made to give what his battalions could not achieve. First of all men he saw that the new and unsettled national system in Europe could never be brought to a stable balance till the northern sea power was free to assert itself in the ancient basin of dominion. He saw how by that means the British frontier could be carried unassailably up to the tenderest borders of the old Mediterranean States which had been wont to give the law to Europe and to count the nations of the North Sea too distant for serious calculation. Having divined the vital secret he never lifted his eyes from the end, and in peace and war, by arms and diplomacy, he strove with unremitting effort to realise his aim.

It was not his hand that achieved it. Death called

a halt and the work was carried to completion by his great disciple. When we think of all its wide results, when we see how far it went to fix the European system on its still existing lines, it seems too brilliant a jewel to add to Marlborough's crown. We shrink from believing that one human mind can have wrought so much. Yet the truth is no less. To the unsurpassed richness of his military renown we must add the greatest achievement that British naval strategy can show. He failed, it is true, to reach the goal he marked, but by his resolute and far-sighted striving towards it, he gained all that was possible, all at least that could be permanent. His failure went to show that, for the purposes of practical strategy, France was not seriously vulnerable from the south, but it proved that with a dominant sea power well placed within the Straits her Mediterranean frontier was useless to her for offence, and that neither for her nor for any other power could the dream of the Roman Empire be revived.

This, as has been said, is after all the great political fact of the seventeenth century, and the highest claim to its parentage rests with the British sea power. It remains the abiding and perhaps the greatest attribute of the Mediterranean Sea—an attribute that has become obscured, but which is as living to-day as when the Peace of Utrecht acknowledged it. A time was coming when the Mediterranean was to have a wider meaning. As the course of European empire spread eastwards to the Indian seas, it became again the centre of the world—the place of arms which dominated the imperial movements of the following century. From that point of view it has a distinct history and a distinct import. In our day, when the European system has grown so solid that it seems as though nothing could seriously disturb it, the new meaning has almost buried the old. The world-

wide empires dominate our imagination. Yet their roots still lie in the European system. If that is shaken, all will shake. The main guarantee of its stability is the British power in the Mediterranean and the general and lasting acquiescence of Europe in the situation which the Peace of Utrecht founded within the Straits is a recognition of that vital truth. The Midland Sea remains still, perhaps more than ever, the keyboard of Europe. Whatever other attributes it may have gained, that one must never be forgotten. In that lies the living reality of those men of the seventeenth century whose work we have followed. In that lies our duty, whatever distractions may arise, to keep green the memory of those old strategists who guided the hand of England to the Straits.

## APPENDIX

### ORIGIN OF THE LINE OF BATTLE

THE fighting instructions issued by Sir Edward Cecil in 1625 have a special interest as throwing a faint light on the origin of the line of battle, which still remains one of the unsolved problems of naval history.

The earliest instructions at present known which indicate a close-hauled line ahead as a tactical formation are those issued by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1617 for the fleet he took to Guiana.<sup>1</sup> It would be rash, however, to assume that they were designed by him, or that they contain the first enunciation of the principle. Fleet orders were almost invariably founded closely on previous examples. Raleigh was certainly not seaman enough to have invented an entirely new scheme; he had never even been present at a fleet action in the open; and there are many indications that the principle he adopted was used in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth. The orders, in all probability, were the common form current at the time.

The first orders which Sir E. Cecil issued followed almost word for word those of Raleigh, which were also probably those employed by Mansell in 1620, since there is no indication that he drew up any new ones. As issued by Cecil they clearly contemplate the fleet's acting in squadrons, in so many distinct close-hauled lines ahead. The ships of each squadron were intended to follow the squadronal flag into action within musket-shot, 'giving so much liberty unto the leading ship, as, after her broadside delivered, she may stay and trim her sails; then is the second to give her broadside, and the third and fourth with the rest of the division, which done, they shall

<sup>1</sup> *S.P. Dom.* cciii. 79.

all tack as the first ship and give their other sides, keeping the enemy in a perpetual volley. This you must do upon the windermost ship or ships of the enemy, which you shall either batter in pieces or force him or them to bear up, and so tangle them or drive them foul one of another to their utter confusion.' On the final day of sailing, however, Cecil amplified this order by a new one, which is very remarkable. It directed that 'the whole fleet, or so many of them as shall be appointed, are to follow the leading ship within musket-shot of the enemy, and give them first their chase pieces, then their broadside, and afterwards a volley of small shot; and when the headmost ship hath done, the next ship shall observe the same course, and so every ship in order, [so] that the headmost may be ready to renew the fight against such time as the sternmost hath made an end, by that means keeping the weather of the enemy, and in continual fight until they be sunk in the sea or forced by bearing up to entangle themselves and to come [foul] one of another to their utter confusion.'

Both these orders are set out in the *Journal of the 'Swiftsure,'* the flagship of the Vice-Admiral Lord Essex, and are apparently the work of his captain, Sir Samuel Argall of Virginia fame, who was one of the most accomplished seamen of his time. In 1617, when Raleigh's orders were issued, he was admiral on the Virginia Station and had since commanded a ship under Mansell. The second order marks a distinct and very noteworthy advance in tactics. For the first time we have unmistakably the idea of a fleet attacking not in separate squadrons or groups, but in one column and in succession. It is clearly a rude conception of the single line ahead. But, curiously enough, having thus, by what means we know not, stumbled on the final solution of the problem, Cecil immediately abandoned it for something more to the taste of his well-drilled mind. For some reason it did not please him, and he took the first opportunity of a calm to call a council of war and submit to it a scheme that was entirely different. It had been prepared, not by Argall but by Sir Thomas Love, his own captain, whom Cecil had instructed to draw up articles embodying his ideas. The fleet had already been organised in three large squadrons, each composed of three royal ships with some five-and-twenty merchantmen and transports. The Dutch

contingent was to form a fourth squadron. But beyond this nothing had been done about 'the form of a sea fight' in the event of an enemy's fleet being encountered. Under the articles which Love presented, there was to be a further sub-division. Each of the three English squadrons was to be organised in three divisions or 'sub-squadrons' of nine ships, with one of the King's ships leading. The system of attack was also changed. For, instead of the nine vessels of the sub-squadrons attacking in succession, they were to 'discharge and fall off three and three as they were filed in the list'—that is to say, they were still to attack in succession, but in groups of three. Such an arrangement was entirely new, and thus in the same fleet we have not only the first mention of the principle of a single line ahead but also of its extreme converse, the small 'group' unit.<sup>1</sup>

Another noteworthy point in Love's proposal is that the Dutch were not to be bound by it. They were expressly permitted 'to observe their own order and method of fighting.' What this was is not stated, but there can be little doubt that the reference is to the boarding tactics, which the Dutch, in common with all continental navies, continued to prefer to the new English 'method' of fighting with the guns alone. The two ideas demanded wholly different tactics, and it is clear that the Dutch 'method' was already recognised as something different from that of the English. The point is important. For the fact that, in the Dutch fleet-orders at the outset of the war of 1652, there is no trace of the conception of a line ahead, or indeed of any order, has been taken as evidence that up to that time no such system can have existed in the English service. In face, however, of the above testimony, that the English and Dutch methods were different, this evidence can have little weight.<sup>2</sup>

So far as we have been permitted to view the scene in the council of war, the reading of Love's draft orders appears to have been received with something like derision. 'It was observed,' says the official account which Glanville drew up, 'that it intended to enjoin our fleet to advance and fight at sea, much after the manner of an army at land, assigning every

<sup>1</sup> Glanville's *Journal* (Camden Soc. 1883, p. 15 *et seq.*).

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, *First Dutch War* (Navy Records Society), i. 300.

ship to a particular division, rank, file, and station, which order and regularity was not only improbable but almost impossible to be observed by so great a fleet in so uncertain a place as the sea.' The first impulse was to reject the orders in mass, but Cecil stuck to his guns. The articles contained many excellent orders for sparing the men, disposing them in quarters and the like, and above all one strictly forbidding any one to open fire at more than caliber and pistol shot, and yet another prohibiting boarding without special order of the admiral, whereby was enforced the cardinal principle of Drake's school, that the ship must be first and last a gun carriage. The supporters of the articles therefore pleaded that for the sake of the good in them they might stand, it being understood that generally they were to be regarded as a council of perfection and not to be strictly enforced. This, after some discussion, was agreed to, and so the articles were passed. As understood by those who had to carry it out, the 'order of fight' is thus summarised by one of Cecil's officers: 'The several admirals to be in square bodies'—that is, each squadronal flag-officer would command a division or sub-squadron formed in three ranks of three files, and they were 'to give their broadsides by threes, and so fall off. The rear-admiral to stand for a general reserve, and not to engage himself in fight without great cause.'<sup>1</sup>

During the next generation there is no sign of any progressive development. Even the tactical idea of Raleigh's instructions is never again enjoined. Sir William Monson, writing about the time of the Ship-money Fleets, repudiates any strict order of battle. In Lord Lindsey's 'Instructions of 1635,' article 18, which alone relates to a battle, is still in the Tudor form, and the precedent is followed in the 'Instructions given by the Right Honourable the Committee of the Lords and Commons for the Admiralty' on May 2, 1648, to Captain William Penn, rear-admiral of the Irish squadron.<sup>2</sup> These again contain but one reference as to what is to be done in a fight. If occasion arise to engage a hostile fleet, every captain is instructed 'to leave the vice-admiral to assail the enemy's admiral and to match

<sup>1</sup> 'Journal of the Expedition,' *S.P. Dom.* x. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Lindsey's are in *Monson's Tracts*, bk. iii.; Penn's are in *Sloane MSS.* 1709, f. 55. G. Penn gives similar ones from an 'original MS.' which he dates 1647, *Life of Penn*, i. 405.

yourself as equally as you can, to succour the rest of the fleet as cause shall require, not wasting your powder, nor shooting afar off, nor till you come side to side.' Thus we see that, up to the advent of the soldier-admirals, no definite battle formation was insisted on. The Elizabethan and Jacobean idea of an attack in succession seems to have been practised, but the only rule was to fight close with the guns, never to board an unbeaten ship, and to stand by your friends.

No sooner, however, had the soldiers obtained the command than we get at least an attempt at something more scientific. After the experience of one campaign of the first Dutch war, the generals-at-sea issued a set of regular fighting instructions. These are the next we have. They were signed by Blake, Deane, Monk, and Desborough at Portsmouth in March 1653,<sup>1</sup> and contain a clear restoration of the line ahead and the germ of a definite tactical system. Article 2 enjoins that at sight of the enemy's fleet the vice-admiral and the rear-admiral shall make all possible effort to come up respectively on the right and left wing of the admiral, leaving a complete distance for the admiral's squadron if the wind permit and there be room enough. Here we have a picture of the fleet bearing down in three columns at sufficient interval to allow the centre squadron space enough to haul its wind and form line parallel with the enemy, an evolution akin to the everyday military movement of advancing in column and deploying.

That a line was contemplated is clear from Article 3. It provides that as soon as the general—that is the commander-in-chief—is engaged, each squadron is 'to take the best advantage it can to engage with the enemy next unto him, and in order thereunto all the ships of every squadron shall endeavour to keep in a line with the chief, unless the chief be maimed or otherwise disabled, which God forbid. . . . Then every ship of the said squadron shall endeavour to keep in line with the admiral, or he that commands in chief next unto him nearest the enemy.' Other articles provide signals for one squadron relieving another that is 'overcharged,' and also for the fleet coming into line with the admiral under various circumstances.

It was on these instructions that the remainder of the war

<sup>1</sup> *Penn's Naval Tracts*, *Sloane MSS.* 3232.

was fought. It is not surprising therefore that in the subsequent actions of 1653 we have the first definite statement of a formation in a single line ahead. From the Hague we have it recorded that on June 2, at the battle off the Gabbard, the first action fought after the issue of the new fighting instructions, the English 'having the wind, they stayed on a tack for half an hour until they put themselves into the order in which they meant to fight, which was in file at half cannon-shot.' The suggestion is that this was certainly not the ordinary formation of the Dutch, and there is no statement that they formed a similar order. Again, for the next battle—that of the Texel—fought on July 31 in the same year, we have the statement of Hoste's informant, who was present as a spectator, that at the opening of the action the English, but not the Dutch, were formed in a single line close-hauled. 'Le 7 Aoust [*i.e.* N.S.],' the French gentleman says, 'je découvris l'armée de l'amiral composée de plus de cent vaisseaux de guerre. Elle était rangée en trois escadrons et elle faisoit vent-arrière pour aller tomber sur les Anglois, qu'elle rencontra le même jour à peu près en pareil nombre rangez [*sic*] sur une ligne qui tenoit plus de quatre lieues Nord-Nord-Est et Sud-Sud-Ouest, le vent étant Nord-Ouest. Le 8 et le 9 se passèrent en des escarmouches, mais le 10 on en vint à une bataille decisive. Les Anglois avoient essayé de gagner le vent : mais l'Amiral Tromp en aiant toujours conservé l'avantage, et l'étant rangé sur une ligne parallèle à celle des Anglois arriva sur eux, &c.' This is the first known instance of a Dutch fleet forming in single line, and, so far as it goes, would tend to show they adopted it in imitation of the English formation.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection another point must be noted. In the previous year several actions had been fought, but in no one of them can be discovered any trace of the line on either side. On the contrary, we have the distinct statement that in the last action but one of the campaign, fought between Blake and De With on September 28, the Dutch awaited the English

<sup>1</sup> Hoste, *Evolutions Navales*, p. 78. Dr. Gardiner declared himself sceptical as to the genuineness of the French gentleman's narrative, mainly on the ground of certain inaccuracies of date and detail; but, as Hoste certainly believed in it, it cannot well be rejected as evidence of the main features of the action for which he used it.

attack, not in line or file, but 'in a close body.'<sup>1</sup> Three other actions were fought before the issue of the 'Fighting Instructions' of March 1653, and those were the battle of Dungeness between Blake and Tromp on November 30, 1652, that of Portland on February 18, 1653, and that of Beachy Head on the 20th. So far as fleet tactics went the two former were probably the worst-fought actions of the war. At Dungeness Blake was deserted by half his fleet, and at Portland Monk, who had a flag for the first time, was left out of action altogether. It is perfectly clear that on none of these occasions either side formed a line. It was immediately after these confused actions that the 'Fighting Instructions' were issued—immediately, that is, after Monk's first experience of naval warfare. We can easily understand how galling to his strict ideas of order and discipline the lamentable exhibition must have been. A professional soldier and martinet of a pronounced order, he was regarded at this time as perhaps the highest authority in the kingdom on the art of war, and it may well have been his influence that produced the attempt to institute a tactical system—a thing which Blake and Deane had hitherto omitted to do. We cannot be certain, but we do know that it was in the next action off the Gabbard on June 2, when Monk commanded alone after Deane was killed, that we have the first indication of a definite tactical system having been attempted. That a substantial improvement was the result is certain: 'Our fleet,' says an eyewitness, 'did work together in better order than before, and seconded one another.' There is, moreover, the important testimony of a Royalist intelligencer writing from the Hague on June 9. After relating the consternation which the English gunnery and refusal to close caused in the Dutch ranks, he goes on to say: 'Tis certain that the Dutch in this fight (by the relation and acknowledgment of Tromp's express sent hither, with whom I spoke) showed very great fear and were in very great confusion, and the English (as he saith) fought in excellent order.'<sup>2</sup> The next action was the one which Hoste's informant described, and which an English officer present commended as 'a very orderly battle.'

<sup>1</sup> Captain John Mildmay's relation. Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, ii. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Clarendon MSS.* 45, f. 470.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the efforts of the soldier-admirals to introduce the line were at once successful. Though it is pretty clear that, after the new orders of 1653, the English practice was to form a true line of battle, it is equally certain that, as a rule, it was not maintained long after the action began. The evidence from the narratives of the Cromwellian and early Restoration battles is overwhelming that the old confusion soon set in, and there is really nothing to contradict it.

The well-known passage in Pepys's 'Diary,' upon which Granville Penn founded his argument that the line was regularly used in Cromwell's time, has been shown by Dr. Gardiner to be incapable of bearing the interpretation he placed upon it.<sup>1</sup> Paul Hoste's definite assertion on the point is particularly strong, and the fact that he admits the first battle of the Texel began with the two fleets ranged parallel to one another in single lines only adds weight to his statement that the second battle of Texel, in 1666, was the first one in which this order was strictly maintained. In the absence, therefore, of direct evidence to the contrary, his statement will probably stand.<sup>2</sup> Nor does it stand alone. There is another little-known piece of testimony which thoroughly supports his assertion. It is contained in a tract published in 1702, entitled 'The Present Condition of the English Navy set forth in a Dialogue betwixt Young Fudg of the Admiralty and Captain Steerwell, an Oliverian Commander.'<sup>3</sup> They are discussing the comparative merits of the present and the Cromwellian time, much to the disadvantage of the former. Fudg, worsted at every point, at last in desperation claims that anyhow the modern system of tactics is better than the old. 'What,' he asks, 'is your opinion of fighting in line?' 'I don't approve of it at all,' Steerwell replies. 'We never used it, and I think we fought desperately, and did as good service as any that succeeded us. I'll give you my reasons against your line. When the fleets engage in a line, supposing the admiral's post to be in the centre and the fight be begun by the windward squadron, the ship first begun

<sup>1</sup> G. Penn, *Life of Sir William Penn*, i. 401; *English Historical Review* xlii. 533; Pepys's *Diary*, July 4, 1666.

<sup>2</sup> *Evolutions Navales*, pp. 42, 78.

<sup>3</sup> *Brit. Mus.* 533, d. 2: a volume of naval tracts.

can only be supported by its second; for the admiral, by reason of the smoke, cannot see how to send her convenient succour, for signals are useless soon after the commencement of the action. Now, when we fought without a line, every one made the best of his way to engage the enemy. We looked for no signals, but when we saw one of our ships overcharged by the enemy we immediately bore down to her assistance; and if we saw one of our own ships grappled by a fireship we came immediately to her assistance, and, after we had cleared her, we sheered off and stood away to the best advantage.' He then cites La Hogue as an instance of the inflexibility of the line preventing a complete victory. 'For my part,' says Fudg, 'I don't understand fighting, but it is a strange thing that the navy officers of all nations should be mistaken in the politic part of fighting.' 'For my part,' answers Steerwell, 'I never saw fighting in line; but this I am certain of, that, if our officers are right in their method of fighting, they don't manage their tacks to the best advantage,' meaning they are too ready to haul out of action.

The evidence of this dialogue is not of course incontestable. We cannot be certain of its authenticity; still, the whole tone of it suggests that it may well have been written by a man who had served in his youth in the Cromwellian navy.

For the fleet of Penn and Venables that went to the West Indies, a set of 'Fighting Instructions' practically identical with those of 1653 was signed by Blake, Monk, Desborough, and Penn on March 31, 1655, and we may take it as certain that they were the same that were used by Blake and Montague off the coast of Spain in the same war, although no copy of them seems to be known.<sup>1</sup> What makes it certain that these instructions represent the last word of the Cromwellians is that they were adopted for the second Dutch war under Charles II., and formed the basis of those under which it was fought.

This fact, which has a most important bearing on the whole question, rests on the secure basis of the 'Sea Book' of the 'Royal Charles,' the flag-ship of the Duke of York, which still exists among the invaluable navy papers of Lord Dartmouth. The first 'Fighting Instructions' that it contains, which we may presume were largely inspired by Sir William Penn, his Captain

<sup>1</sup> G. Penn, *Life of Penn*, ii. 76, where Penn's orders are set out in full.

of the Fleet, are practically identical with those of 1653 and 1655. They are not dated, but are immediately followed by three 'Additional Instructions' which further emphasise the importance of endeavouring to keep a single line. These are dated April 10, 1665. Then follow a set of 'Sailing Instructions,' dated November 16, 1666, and these again are followed by a further set of 'Additional Instructions to be observed in the next fight.' This last set contain further directions for keeping the line and, for the first time, instructions for a tactical movement for cutting the enemy's line and concentrating on the isolated portion. They also introduce an article imposing the penalty of death upon a commander who, being out of the line, endeavours to fire over it at the enemy.

These new provisions are clearly from their position in the 'Sea Book' not earlier than the 'Sailing Instructions' of Nov. 16, 1666. This enables us to fix the date of the famous 'Fighting Instructions' of the Duke of York, upon which it is usually supposed the second Dutch war was fought. For these 'Instructions' incorporate the second set of 'Additional Instructions,' and were therefore subsequent to Nov. 16, 1666. As no action was fought after that date it is clear we must regard the war as having been fought under Blake's and Monk's 'Instructions' of 1653, as amplified by the 'Additional Instructions' of April 1665.<sup>1</sup>

Summing up the general results of this series of 'Instructions' we may say, firstly, that the close-hauled line ahead appears to have been a gradual and normal development, starting in Elizabethan times, halting during the period of peace between Charles I.'s war and the Commonwealth, and revived and solidified when the soldier-admirals brought their instincts for a tactical system to bear upon naval warfare.

Secondly, that although the line was conceived as a tactical

<sup>1</sup> It is unnecessary here to set out the articles in detail, as it is intended to publish the whole of them in a forthcoming volume of the Navy Records Society, at whose disposal Lord Dartmouth has kindly placed the originals, and by whose courtesy I have been permitted to see them. A copy of the complete set of 'Instructions' will be found in Granville Penn's *Life of Penn*, ii. 605. Another and amplified set is among the *Dartmouth MSS.* counter-signed 'W. Wren,' who was secretary to the Duke of York from 1667 to 1672. This is probably the final form. Copies of all the earlier sets are also in *Harleian MSS.* 1247, but in some chronological confusion.

system in the first Dutch war, its advocates were not able to enforce it till practice and experience, about the end of the second war, had produced minds that believed in it and the skill to use it. This is all that can safely be extracted from the famous conversation between Penn and Pepys about the 'Four-Days' Battle' in the first week of June 1666. The passage in the 'Diary' is as follows: 'Sir William Penn came to me and we talked of the late fight. He says we must fight in line, whereas we fight promiscuously to our utter and demonstrable ruin, the Dutch fighting otherwise, and we whenever we beat them.' The inference is clearly, not that the Dutch fought in line and that we did not, but that, although the line was known and approved by such men as Penn, it was observed in some actions and not so well in others, owing to the fact, as Penn himself explained, 'that our very commanders, nay our very flag officers, do stand in need of exercising amongst themselves and discouraging the business of commanding a fleet.'

It must also be remembered that Penn was not present at the battle, and that after all this is only Pepys's gossip report of what he said. It could not in any case stand against the clear and direct testimony we have that the battle was fought in line. We know from the official narrative that, as the enemy were sighted, Monk made the signal for 'line of batalia,' and we have a contemporary plan showing the two fleets engaged in parallel single lines.<sup>1</sup> We also know that it was in this very battle that Armand de Gramont, Comte de Guiche, was so deeply impressed with the beauty of the English line. 'Sur les six heures du matin,' he says of the second day's proceedings, 'nous aperçûmes la flotte des Anglois qui revenoit dans un ordre admirable; car ils marchent par le front comme seroit une armée de terre, et quand ils approchent ils s'étendent et tournent leurs bords pour combattre, parce que le front à la mer se fait par le bord du vaisseau.' Again, later on he says: 'Rien n'égale le bel ordre et la discipline des Anglois: que jamais ligne n'a été tirée plus droite que celle que leurs vaisseaux forment.' He further makes it clear that the Dutch captains neither approved nor observed the rigid line, believing that a looser formation gave a better chance for their boarding tactics. Later on in the action, how-

<sup>1</sup> See 'Narrative' and the plan entitled 'A Model of the Fleets as they were drawn up to fight' in *Add. MSS.* 32094, f. 137.

ever, he says that 'De Ruyter de son côté appliqua toute son industrie pour donner une meilleure forme à sa ligne . . . . Enfin par ce moiën nous nous remimes sur une ligne parallèle à celle des Anglois.' Guiche himself had no doubt as to which was the better system. In his final criticism of the actions he says: 'A la vérité l'ordre admirable de leur armée doit toujours être imité et pour moi je sais bien que si je étois dans le service de mer, et que je commandasse des vaisseaux du roi, je songerais à battre les Anglois par leur propre manière et non pas avec celle des Hollandais et de nous autres, qui est de vouloir aborder.' It is abundantly clear therefore that Guiche at any rate regarded the new line of battle as an English device to develop to the utmost their favourite method of fighting—that is, crushing the enemy by gunfire—as opposed to the boarding tactics adopted by all other nations.<sup>1</sup>

We are further entitled to assume that the new battle formation arose out of the 'Fighting Instructions' of 1653, since we now know that it was under these 'Instructions' as amended by the Duke of York the battle that Guiche describes was fought, and that it was also under them was fought the battle of June 3, 1665, off the Texel, at which Hoste says the battle order of two opposing parallel lines close-hauled 'fut exactement gardé pour la première fois.'

Finally we may say that the oft-repeated assertion that the line ahead was invented by the Dutch and copied from them by the English does not rest on any shred of direct evidence that has yet been produced. The impression appears to have arisen from reading into Penn's remarks to Pepys something that he certainly did not say, and disregarding something that he did say. Against any such interpretation of Penn's meaning we have firstly all the direct testimony given above that the English were at least attempting to fight in a strict line when the Dutch were still content with their old scrambling group tactics, and secondly the unimpeachable fact that Tromp's orders of June 20, 1652, contain no reference whatever to a line of battle but only to subdivisional groups.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires du Comte de Guiche concernant les Provinces-Unies des Pays-Bas, etc., servant de supplément à ceux d'Aubry du Maurier et du Comte d'Estrades*, pp. 249, 251, 255, 266, London, 1744.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 321.

The belief that the organisation of fleets into squadrons was also a Dutch invention is still more difficult to account for. Even Dr. Gardiner, whose caution in dealing with naval tactics is exemplary, shared it. 'The division into three squadrons,' he says, 'which had been first displayed in the battle off Portland (Feb. 1653), was imitated from the Dutch practice.'<sup>1</sup> Yet nothing is more certain than that the division into three or more squadrons had been employed in every English fleet of sufficient size for a century at least, and in every large Mediterranean fleet from time immemorial. Apart from this it is certain that Blake's fleet in 1652 was divided into the usual three squadrons, under the admiral, vice-admiral, and rear-admiral. In Vice-Admiral Penn's letter to an intelligence officer of the Council of State, dated October 2, relating to the action off the Kentish Knock, he says: 'Our General not having above three of his squadron . . . and I with most of my squadron very near him, I sent to know of the General if I should leave him and bear up among the enemy with my squadron.' And again: 'We ran a fair berth ahead of our General to give room for my squadron to lie between him and us.'<sup>2</sup> It is possible that Dr. Gardiner was thinking of the nine-fold division which was established by the 'Fleet Orders' of January 1653. By these orders each of the three usual squadrons was assigned its distinguishing flag—red, blue, and white respectively—and each was divided into three sub-divisions under their respective admirals, vice-admirals, and rear-admirals. Such an organisation was of course peculiarly well adapted to the group system of the Dutch, and may possibly have been adopted directly from them. We know, at any rate, that Tromp had organised his fleet on this system as early as June 20, 1652. Still it may be doubted whether even this idea was purely Dutch, since, as we have seen, Sir Edward Cecil attempted to introduce a similar system of 'sub-squadrons' as early as 1625.

<sup>1</sup> *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii. 329, and cf. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 276. For the squadronising of Henry VIII's fleet in 1545 see *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, i. 51 *et seq.*; for that of 1588, *ibid.* ii. 177-8, 244-6; for that of Drake and Norreys in 1589, *ibid.* 324-6. For the first use of squadronal flags in 1596, *Naval Miscellany* (Navy Records Soc.), i. 28 *et seq.*

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